

St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Parish Priest: Fr. Thomas Mason e-mail: gainford.stosmund@rcdbn.org.uk

Tel: 01833 631457 Mobile: : 07876 308657

Website: www.stosmunds.co.uk

Hogarth Partnership

St Anne, St Augustine, St Mary, St Osmund, Holy Family, St Teresa, St Thomas Aquinas, SS William & Francis De Sale

FoodBank: The Well: 46 East Green, West Auckland. DL14 9HJ. Opening times: Wednesday-Friday 9am - 3pm
Items may be left at the Foodbanks during their opening times or placed in St. Osmund's Church porch.

Please Pray for:

The sick of the Parish: Patrick Doherty, Nico Human, Alexandra Jüngst, Kate Konig, Nino Volpe and Susan Hunton

Tea & Coffee after Mass

Tea and coffee are available after Mass in the parish centre— all are most welcome to join this moment of fellowship as a parish.

Offertory

If you wish to make your donations directly to St. Osmund's. Bank account details are:

HSBC: D.H & N Gainford St. Osmund's.

Account No. 41164015.

Sort Code 40-34-18.



3rd Sunday of Advent 17th December

Theme: Good News for the poor

God has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the poor. To comfort those whose hearts are broken, To proclaim freedom to those who are being held captive. And to those who are oppressed by others, And to announce a time of blessing and justice from our God.

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

Children's Liturgy

There will be a Children's Liturgy this Sunday and next Sunday

Today there will be a Cake Sale to raise funds for World Gifts

Peace for the people of Ukraine

We continue to pray earnestly for peace in Ukraine, joining the Holy Father in his consecration of Russia and Ukraine to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart – may her prayers bring a swift end to the conflict, and consolation to the bereaved and to the many thousands of refugees.

Church Sound System

You will readily notice that during the week the new sound system was installed. This should give far greater clarity, helping people to hear what it being said. It also has more flexibility to play music or other recordings. Many thanks to the engineers who worked quickly and efficiently; also thanks go to Joe who put in much work getting us to this point.

There will be fund-raising events taking place to help to cover the cost of the system, please keep an eye out and support these ventures generously.

Churches Together Carol Service.

Churches Together in Gainford will hold its annual carol service this evening 17th December at 6pm, at S. Mary's. All are most welcome.

Beautiful pictures - Thanks to Rachael



Readings and Reflection

3rd Sunday of Advent

17th December

First reading Isaiah 61:1-2, 10,11

The spirit of God is upon me.
 God has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the poor,
 To comfort those whose hearts are broken,
 To proclaim freedom to those who are being held captive
 And to those who are oppressed by others,
 And to announce a time of blessing and justice from our God.
 My heart is happy and filled with joy,
 For God has given me the clothes of salvation.
 God has put on me a robe of justice.
 I am like a bridegroom wearing a crown,
 Or a bride wearing her jewels.
 And now, our God will bring justice and glory to all the nations.

Responsorial Psalm Luke 1:46-55

God my heart delights in you. Holy is your name.

You keep your promise always; helping your people all their day

You care for your servant; all will see. Now your goodness blesses me.

Second reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

May you all be kept safe for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation Lk3:4,6

Alleluia, alleluia!

Change your lives, he's coming. The one who is the light of the world is coming.

Change your lives, he's coming. The reign of God is near. Alleluia, Alleluia! "The reign of God is near."

Alleluia!

Gospel John 1:6-8,19-28

A man came, sent by God. His name was John.
 He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him.
 He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him,

St. Osmund's Parish Gainford

'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Copyright: Scripture readings from the Jerusalem Bible are published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd and Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc. Text of the Psalms: Copyright © 1963, The Grail (England). Used with permission of A.P. Watt Ltd. All rights reserved.

Feast Day this week:

Thursday 21st December: St Peter Canisius

Saturday 23rd December St John of Canty

*The Cycle of Prayer***Openness to the Word of God****Background**

In many denominations this Sunday is known as Bible Sunday. This originates from the Collect for this Sunday in the Book of Common Prayer:

*Blessed Lord,
 who caused all holy Scriptures
 to be written for our learning:
 help us so to hear them,
 to read, mark, learn,
 and inwardly digest them,
 that, through patience,
 and the comfort of your holy word,
 we may embrace and for ever hold fast
 the hope of everlasting life,
 which you have given us
 in our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Advent is a time when the Church 're-reads and re-lives the great events in salvation history in the "today" of her liturgy'. [CCC 1095]

Prayer

*All-wise God,
 as you have granted us
 to drink with delight
 from the Word
 that leads us to know you,
 in your goodness grant us also
 to come at length to you,
 source of all wisdom,
 and stand for ever before your face.*

based on a prayer of the Venerable Bede

Reflections on the Readings**3rd Sunday of Advent****17th 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.

In a spirit of joyful service

Today's readings are brimful of joy and hope. Israel radiates as a joyful bride coming to her bridegroom adorned for a lavish, oriental wedding. Paul's words to the Thessalonians continue the theme of hope and joy in a community that lives by the life of Christ. And St John, in the gospel, pictures the work of John the Baptist, who came to witness to God's light upon this earth. This is not a joyousness without responsibility. It's a joy that is found when people find and carry out their true mission in life. Isaiah speaks of one anointed and sent to bring good news to the oppressed – words that were adopted by Jesus to describe his own life's purpose – just as they should also be made real in the life of every Christian. Those privileged to share in Jesus' spiritual life must also share in his concerns and desires.

Two key ideas in today's readings go well together:

- 1. The spiritual joy that marks the Christian faith, that we are waiting for the coming of the Lord, and our entry into a life of eternal communion with God. The other is the willingness to bear our share of the Christian work-load, to do our bit, in our time, to realise the goals of Jesus in our world. I'd like to hear a homily focussed on one of these, without totally forgetting the other. In these times of economic austerity and budget cuts that are endlessly debated, is no harm to be reminded of the blessings in our lives, our reasons to be joyful. Mention, for example, the love we enjoy with our family and friends, the pleasure of meeting new people, of awakening some dormant talent by taking a course of adult education; the solidarity we feel in our local community when people willingly help their neighbours in their needs; the consolation to be found in prayer. Many examples can be named, to illustrate God's blessing in our lives: reasons to be joyful. Like the northern Irish writer C.S. Lewis, we too can be "surprised by joy," and re-discover gladness and meaning in life.*
- 2. Our advent-mission to help the needy, if we are to carry on "the project of Jesus" – the commitment he always showed to people on the margins. Practical examples of his "good news for the poor" can be pointed out, according to the life-situation of the worshippers. Our homilist must try to persuade those whose lives are peaceful and prosperous not to be afraid to let the pain of the needy come through to them and touch them. The sort of carefree joy that lets us shut our eyes to the seamier side of life, and "pass by on the other side," is not the authentic joy announced in today's reading. Care for our neglected neighbours may stand in a certain tension with our personal sense of joy, but the two can and should be blended into the lifestyle of anybody who wants to build their life on Jesus. associationofcatholicpriests.ie*

Advent Reflections. To assist with your preparation of Christmas there are some Advent reflections available. By the doors there are copies of '**Walk with Me**' booklets which provide a journey of prayer through Advent; with a short reflection for each. There is a standard version, as well as one for children. A donation of £1 would be appreciated for the adult version.

You are welcome to take a copy of the children's version for your family or for others at no cost.

The Diocese has also produced Advent reflections which are available on-line at <https://bit.ly/DHNAAdvent>

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 email

lee.marie@lsplondon.co.uk

World Gifts

At the back of church are some catalogues from CaFOD with various world gifts for Christmas. These are a way to show God's love at Christmas in a practical way; providing desperately needed resources in less developed parts of the world, rather than giving people presents which can simply become yet more clutter.

Memorial Acclamation

We have got used to singing the memorial acclamation using the first option. So that there is some variety today we will sing the second text ('When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again'), the tune is very similar and I'm sure that we will get used to this over the next few weeks.

In our Gospel today we come across the figure of S. John the Baptist, easily one of the most significant figures in the Gospel. Along with the special cases of Christ and Our Lady he is the only person whose birth and death are both celebrated by feasts. In many ways he is the bridge which carries us across from the Old Testament into the New – the final prophet who prepared the people of God for the coming of Christ, but who was also able to welcome him into the world. The only Saint who is present for more of Christ's life is Our Lady; S. John first encountered Christ when both of them were unborn children, and was killed only a couple of years before Christ. A figure who made an impact beyond the Christian community, having been mentioned by Josephus in his 'Antiquities of the Jews', recognised as a holy figure unjustly put to death.

We first hear of S. John at his conception, his father was a Priest and received an angelic visitation which announced his coming. The Old Testament priesthood was hereditary, and therefore it is significant that S. John would have been a priest as well. Six months later, straight after the Annunciation, Our Lady came to visit her cousin, S. John's mother. As we emphasise the importance of the unborn, and of their complete humanity, the fact that Christ and S. John met before they were even born should resonate and encourage us.

Later in life, S. John sees Christ and says 'Behold the Lamb of God' (words which we hear repeated at every Mass). These two acknowledgements, one silent and one aloud both point to Christ's coming sacrifice. The priesthood (which S. John had from his father), had as its function the offering of sacrifices of God (the most important being Passover lambs), and so calling Christ the 'Lamb of God' shows how those sacrifices were now to be replaced by the eternal sacrifice of the Cross. We use those words at Mass to remind us that this sacrifice is made present to us in the Mass. As well as being a priest, S. John is also a prophet. Centuries of Hebrew prophets had called God's people to return to him, had pointed forward to the coming of the Messiah. All of those great prophets come together in S. John. As we hear today, Isaiah predicted the coming of S. John, the voice crying out in the wilderness.

Like so many of those prophets of the Old Testament, he also called on the people to return to God and his ways. His message, like so many of them, was to repent of your sins and leave them behind – a message which we certainly still need today. This message was well received by some, but not by all – he publicly attacked Herod for marrying his brother's wife, and was imprisoned...but even here we are told that 'Herod was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly.' Even in the middle of condemnation he recognised that there was the working of God. This was not enough, and S. John was killed for speaking out boldly for the truth.

For all of this he was acclaimed by Christ in return; he speaks highly of S. John as the messenger preparing the way for the Messiah, going so far as to say 'among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.' By contrast, S. John's response is one of humility; he sees himself entirely in terms of pointing to Christ rather than to himself. In this he is the true model of the Christian, and especially of the Christian minister. We should all seek to join with S. John in saying 'I must decrease so that Christ may increase'. **Fr. Thomas.**



Christmas Mass times at S. Osmund

Sunday 24 December (Fourth Sunday of Advent) – Parish Mass at 9.30am

Sunday 24 December (Vigil Mass of Christmas) – Carols at 6pm, followed by Mass at 6.30

Monday 25 December (Christmas Day) – Parish Mass at 9.30am

Best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy week ahead

