

# St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

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## 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:

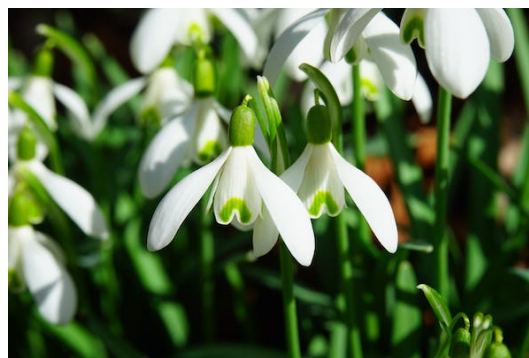
**The sick of the Parish:** Patrick Doherty, Nico Human, Alexandra Jüngst, Kate Konig, Nino Volpe and Susan Hunton

### 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.

**LOUDfence. St. Mary's Cathedral and Newcastle Cathedral 3rd-6th March. Welcome to All.**

Together with the Diocese of Newcastle, our diocesan family is privileged to be hosting a LOUDfence at St. Mary's Cathedral and at Newcastle Cathedral. It will begin at the 11.30 Sunday Mass on the 3rd March at St. Mary's Cathedral and end with a Service of the Word at Newcastle Cathedral on the 6th March at 7pm. Everyone is welcome to these liturgies and to visit both Cathedrals during the days to offer their prayers and support for all who have suffered abuse within church communities and all contexts. We are invited to leave prayers and messages together with provided items like the prayer ribbons presented to Bishop Stephen at his Installation Mass, which are still tied to his Bishop's Chair. People can leave their prayers and messages within or outside of the Cathedrals, recognising some people would rather not enter a place of worship. There will be people available for pastoral accompaniment if that is requested. As a diocesan family we pray for all who have suffered abuse and recognise our shared duty to safeguard the vulnerable.



## The 1st Sunday of Lent

### Theme: Repent

*'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'*

**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 each Sunday during Lent**

### 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.*

### Churches Together in Gainford A.G.M.

Churches together in Gainford will be holding its A.G.M. this Tuesday at 11am here at S. Osmund. As well as hearing reports on the work of the group over the past year, we will also be given a presentation by First Stop Darlington, the local charity which we will be supporting during Lent this year.

### Lent lunch – volunteers needed

The two Lent lunches for Churches Together in Gainford will take place on Tuesday 27 February, and Tuesday 12 March. Volunteers to help with the one hosted here are most welcome.

### 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.

**Readings and Reflection****1st Sunday of Lent****18th February****First reading Genesis 9:8-15****'There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again'**

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.' God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

**Responsorial Psalm 24(25):4-6,7b-9****Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.**

Lord, make me know your ways.  
 Lord, teach me your paths.  
 Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
 for you are God my saviour.

Remember your mercy, Lord,  
 and the love you have shown from of old.  
 In your love remember me,  
 because of your goodness, O Lord.

The Lord is good and upright.  
 He shows the path to those who stray,  
 He guides the humble in the right path,  
 He teaches his way to the poor.

**Second reading 1 Peter 3:18-22****The water on which the Ark floated is a type of the baptism which saves you now**

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

**Gospel Acclamation Mt4:4**

1st time: Cantor(s), 2nd: Assembly  
 Glo - ry and praise to you, O Christ.  
 Glo - ry and praise to you, O Christ.

Man does not live on bread alone,  
 but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.  
**Glory and praise to you, O Christ**

**Gospel Mark 1:12-15****Jesus was tempted by Satan, and the angels looked after him**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

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**Feast Day this week:****Tuesday 20th February: World Day of Social Justice****Wednesday 21st February: St Peter Damian****Thursday 22nd: St Peter's Chair****Friday 23rd February: St Polycarp****The Cycle of Prayer****The Needy and Hungry of the World**

especially on Lenten Fast Day —1st Friday in Lent  
**Background**

The agency for Overseas development, Cafod, encourages the Church in England and Wales to use the 1st Friday of Lent as an opportunity to remember the needy and hungry of the world. The day is an opportunity the three Lenten disciplines of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving which derive from the proclamation of the Word on Ash Wednesday. The proceeds from the practice of fasting on the Friday are usually collected at Mass on the 1st Sunday of Lent.

**Prayer**

*All powerful Father,  
 God of goodness,*

*you provide for all your creation.*

*Give us an effective love for our brothers and sisters  
 who suffer from lack of food.*

*Help us do all we can to relieve their hunger,  
 that they may serve you with carefree hearts.*

**Roman Missal**

**Reflection on the Readings****1st Sunday of Lent****18th February**

*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.*

**Opposing forces**

*Last Wednesday we began the season of Lent. We have five weeks of Lent now until Easter. Lent does not have quite the impact it used to have. It doesn't seem to have as much of an impact on the lives of Christians as Ramadan has on the lives of Muslims. Yet, it is worth reminding ourselves that Lent is beginning. As a church we have set out on a journey which will end at the Easter Triduum, those three great days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The gospel reading for the first Sunday of Lent is always the gospel reading of the temptation of Jesus. Mark's account of the temptation of Jesus is the shortest by far. We are given no dialogue between Jesus and Satan; the temptations are not spelled out in any way. Instead we have that enigmatic statement that Jesus 'was with the wild beasts and the angels ministered to him'.*

*We could think of wild beasts and angels as two opposing forces. The wild beasts could be understood as servants of Satan, putting Jesus' relationship with God to the test, enticing him to put himself rather than God at the centre of his life. The angels, in contrast, are servants of God, supporting Jesus in his time of struggle, giving him the strength to stand firm in the test, to withstand the onslaught. There is some parallel between where Jesus found himself in that wilderness at the very beginning of his ministry and our own lives. We too can find ourselves caught between wild beast and angels. We too can find our best convictions, our deepest values, being put to the test. The values of the gospel are not always at home in the world in which we live. The pressure to compromise with those values can be very strong. We can find ourselves in something of a moral and spiritual wilderness where there is very little appreciation for or understanding of the gospel message. Indeed, we can feel very alone as Jesus must have felt very alone in the wilderness.*

*At such times we have to remind ourselves that we are not alone, no more than Jesus was really alone in the wilderness. The angels are ministering to us. The Lord's ministering, empowering and comforting presence is always at hand. That was the opening message of Jesus as soon as he stepped out of the wilderness, 'the time has come; the kingdom of God is close at hand'. Jesus had come up against the kingdom of Satan during his forty days in the wilderness. However he emerged from that testing time knowing that the kingdom of God was stronger than the kingdom of Satan, proclaiming that the reign of God was present for all. In his letter to the Romans Saint Paul would put that conviction in a very succinct fashion, 'where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more'. That is why Paul could say to the members of the church in Corinth, 'God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it'. There may indeed be wild beast out there, forces that seek to undermine our faith in the Lord and the way of life that flows from that. However, today's gospel reading assures us that there is an even more fundamental reality, and that is the reality of the Lord's empowering presence. The angels will minister to us; the Lord will stand by us. He has given us and will continue to give us an abundance of resources. God is constantly at work among us and within us. Like Saint Paul we can say, 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me'.*

*One way of understanding Lent is to see it as the time when we try to give in to the many ways that God may be trying to touch our lives. We often think of Lent as a time when we try to give up things. There can be a real value in that. However, more fundamentally and more positively we might think of Lent as a time when we give in to the Lord who is always present to us and calling out to us. The church sets aside this season of Lent in the springtime of the year as a reminder that we may need to awaken spiritually. Although the Lord is present to us, we are not always present to him. Although the reign of God is at hand, we don't always entrust ourselves to that good news. As we awaken spiritually, as we give in to the Lord, as we become more aware of the Lord who is around me, above me, below me, at my right hand and at my left hand, then we may experience a new desire to give up whatever is not serving our relationship with the Lord. We enter this season of Lent not just as individuals but as a community of faith. It is as a community that we are called to turn more fully towards the Lord and to walk together in his company towards Holy Week. 'We will get to our destination if we join hands' (Aung San Sui Kyi of Burma).*

[associationofcatholicpriests.ie](http://associationofcatholicpriests.ie)

**Feast of the Chair of S. Peter**

As we are now into Lent there are fewer feasts during the week, the Church limits the celebration of the Saints during this season so that we get more of a sense of the season, but the more important celebrations still get a look in. This Thursday one crops up which might seem somewhat odd at first – the Chair of S. Peter.

This isn't a feast day to celebrate a piece of furniture, we're not about to mark S. Paul's wardrobe, or S. John the Baptist's kitchen table. Rather it's about what the chair symbolises. There is a long and widespread tradition of seats having an importance – we might well note the idea of a royal throne. Alternatively, to take a biblical example, we are told at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount that Christ 'sat down' (Matthew 5:1) – to sit down and speak was seen as the prerogative of somebody in authority...we might also note that when Christ was in front of Pilate he sat down to pronounce the sentence of death (John 19:13).

The Church continues to have this idea in each diocese in the Cathedral. Being very formal we would speak of the 'cathedral church' because technically 'cathedral' here is an adjective. The cathedral is the church which houses the cathedra, and the cathedra is the Bishop's seat – the sign of his authority to teach and to govern the Diocese. Thursday's feast of S. Peter's Chair is the same sort of chair. It isn't so much a physical seat, but rather the symbol of the authority which Christ gave to S. Peter over the Church to guide and to teach her. The same authority which then passed to his successor Linus, and in turn to every Pope since, up to and including Pope Francis today. This feast should turn our eyes to that authority, and the importance of the Church's unity around the successor of S. Peter.

It also speaks to us of the nature of authority in the Church. The Gospel for the feast is where Christ commissions S. Peter as the first Pope; S. Peter declares that Our Lord is the Christ and receives the reply:

Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18-19)

S. Peter receives the authority because he has been open to listening to what God told him. This isn't about S. Peter or any of the other Popes having power to play with, it's about them listening to God and guiding the Church under the authority of God. This is why it's important for us always to pray for the Pope, as Pope Francis asked us to immediately after his election.

Authority is also given not so much for the enjoyment of the person in authority, but for everybody else. One of the titles used by the Popes is 'servus servorum dei' (servant of the servants of God); Popes are there to serve the rest of us, to serve us in the way that they guide the Church. Similarly Bishops and Priests and indeed everybody who holds a position of authority in the Church are servants of the people – always following the model of Christ who 'came not to be served but to serve.'

Fr. Thomas.

**Lent - Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle**

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 14 February. Lent is the time in the Church's year where we are asked to spend time in prayerful reflection considering how we reflect the image and likeness of God. In what ways are we faithful in our unique calling and when do we fall short? This year we are invited to invest time and energy in renewing our prayer life, taking the Lord's prayer as our starting point. Perhaps this Lent you might commit to making more space in the busyness of daily life for prayer or to try praying differently.

**Sycamore Online Sessions for Lent 2024**

In this Season of Lent, why not join us online (via Zoom) for the following Sycamore sessions, which will focus on knowing God and our response to live out a 'ministry of love' in faith, freedom and love.

The sessions will take place on Thursdays throughout Lent from 7.00pm to 8.15pm.

- **22 February: "Who is Jesus?"**
- **29 February: "The Holy Spirit and the Church"**
- **7 March: "The Gift of Faith"**
- **14 March: "Finding True Freedom"**
- **21 March: "The Meaning of Love"**

All are welcome! Each session can stand alone so there is no obligation to attend all if you can't commit to every week. Some of you may have had experience of Sycamore previously, so we'll be using an alternative set of questions which will give you more opportunities to reflect on your own experiences of faith.

Please register your interest to receive the Zoom link. You can do this by completing the [online form](#) or by calling the admin team on 0191 243 3316.

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

