

# 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 König, Nino Volpe, Bernadette Wyer, Patrick Heffernan and Susan Hunton

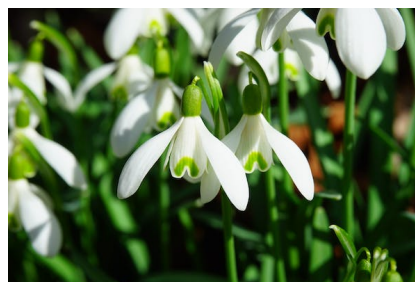
### Offertory

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



## The 2nd Sunday of Lent

### Theme: *The beloved Son*

*'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'*

**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.*

### Gospel acclamation during Lent

We do not sing 'Alleluia' at this time. Our acclamation will be: *'Glory and Praise to You O Christ'*. Fr Thomas will sing once and we will repeat. Please join in.

### 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.

### Lenten Day for Families

Catholic Mothers and the Carmelite Friars invite you to a Lenten Family Day at St John Vianney's, West Denton on Saturday 9th March, beginning with 10am Mass and followed by a short talk, opportunity for Confession, a soup lunch, children's activities and social time. All ages and families welcome. For more information email [catholicmothersne@gmail.com](mailto:catholicmothersne@gmail.com)

### 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.

**First reading Genesis 22:1-2,9-13,15-18****The sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith**

God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham' he called. 'Here I am' he replied. 'Take your son,' God said 'your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.'

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham' he said. 'I am here' he replied. 'Do not raise your hand against the boy' the angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.' Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt-offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. 'I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.'

**Responsorial Psalm 115(116):10,15-19****I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

I trusted, even when I said:

'I am sorely afflicted,'

O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
you have loosened my bonds.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make;  
I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfil  
before all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

**Second reading Romans 8:31-34****God did not spare his own Son**

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

**Gospel Acclamation Mt17:5**

1st time: Cantor(s), 2nd: Assembly

Glo - ry and praise to you, O Christ.

Glo - ry and praise to you, O Christ.

From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:  
'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!****Gospel Mark 9:2-10****This is my Son, the Beloved**

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus. As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

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**Feast Day this week:**

**Tuesday 27th February:** St. Gregory of Narek

**Friday 1st March:** St David

**The Cycle of Prayer****Candidates for the Sacraments****Prayer**

*Father of love and power,  
it is your will to establish everything in Christ  
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.*

*Guide the elect of your Church:  
strengthen them in their vocation,  
build them into the kingdom of your Son,  
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.*

*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*

**Reflection on the Readings****2nd Sunday of Lent****25th 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.*

**Freedom to let go**

*I came across a sentence in a book I was reading recently which struck me very forcibly: 'all love relationships flourish only when there is freedom to let go of what is precious, so as to receive it back as a gift'. It is not easy to let go of what is precious. The more precious someone is to us, the harder it is to let go of that person. The more attractive someone is to us, the more we feel inclined to possess that person. Yet, in the effort to possess someone we can easily lose them. At the heart of all loving relationships is the freedom to let go of the other, and in letting go to receive the other back as a gift. Parents know that there comes a time when they have to let go of their sons or daughters, even though they are more precious to them than anything else. They may have to let them go to another country or to the person whom they have chosen as their future spouse. Yet, in letting go of their children, parents invariably discover that they receive them back as a gift. Single people too have to learn the freedom of letting go what is precious so as to receive it back as a gift. In any good and healthy friendship, people need to give each other plenty of space.*

*In today's reading Abraham is portrayed as being willing to let go of what was most precious to him, the only son of his old age. In being willing to let his son go to God, he went on to receive him back as a gift. Many people find it a very disturbing story, because it portrays God as asking Abraham to sacrifice his only beloved son as a burnt offering to God. We are rightly shocked by the image of God asking a father to sacrifice his son in this way. Abraham lived about a thousand years before Christ. In the religious culture of that time it was not uncommon for people to sacrifice their children to various gods. The point of the story seems to be that the God of Israel is not like the pagan gods. If Abraham thought that God was asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac like the people who worshipped other gods, he was wrong. God was not asking this of Abraham. Yet, the willingness of Abraham to let go of what was most precious to him if that was what God was asking remained an inspiration to the people of Israel. He had already shown a willingness to let go of his family and his homeland as he set out towards an unknown land in response to God's call.*

*The early church came to understand the relationship between Abraham and Isaac as pointing ahead to the relationship between God the Father and Jesus. Like Abraham, God was prepared to let go of what was most precious to him, his one and only Son, out of love for humanity. God was prepared to let his Son go to humanity, with all the dangers that entailed for his Son. Saint Paul was very struck by this extraordinary generosity of God on our behalf, as he says in the 2nd Reading, 'God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all'. God let his precious Son go to humanity even though the consequences of that were the rejection of his Son and, ultimately, his crucifixion. Even after Jesus was crucified, God continued to give him to us as risen Lord. When Paul contemplates this self-emptying love of God for us, he asks aloud, in the opening line of that 2nd Reading, 'With God on our side who can be against us?' Paul is declaring that if God's love for us is this complete, then we have nothing to fear from anyone. Here is a love that has no trace of possessiveness, a love that makes us lovable.*

*In today's gospel reading, Peter, James and John are taken up a high mountain by Jesus, and there they have an experience of Jesus which took their breath away. It was an experience that was so precious that Peter could not let it go. He wanted to prolong it indefinitely and so he says to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is wonderful for us to be here, so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'. He and the other two disciples had a fleeting glimpse of the heavenly beauty of Christ, and did not want to let go of it. Beauty always attracts; it calls out to us. Yet, Peter and the others had to let go of this precious experience; it was only ever intended to be momentary. They would receive it back in the next life as a gift. For now, their task was to listen to Jesus, 'This is my beloved Son. Listen to him'. That is our task too. We spend our lives listening to the Lord as he speaks to us in his word and in and through the circumstances of our lives; we listen to him as a preparation for that wonderful moment when we see him face to face in eternity and we can finally say, 'it is wonderful to be here'.*

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

**Lent - Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle**

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.

- **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. 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.

**Change to Sunday Mass times**

Last year you were all asked for your views on the schedule of Sunday Masses across the communities which I serve, it was very clear from the outset that some people were saddened that Barnard Castle did not have Mass on a Sunday morning and asked me whether it would be possible for this to change. It is important that the legitimate desires of the congregations are respected and are fulfilled as far as possible; and so in keeping with the call to synodality, to listening to the various voices and seeking to gather them into any decision, a process of consultation was begun.

This began with the two Parish Pastoral Councils, both of which were asked to discuss among themselves (in my absence) and to present their views and perspectives. Then the whole of the congregations were asked to contribute, with a short questionnaire allowing a simple expression of preference, as well as space to give explanations and reasons behind the ideas expressed. These views were gathered and considered, with input from outside of the parish through the local Dean. When the process began there was no preconceived idea of what would come out, any and all options were open to consideration. Once a proposal had been created, this was discussed with the Episcopal Vicar (the representative of the Bishop in the south of the Diocese), and once he had agreed it, it was forwarded to the Bishop for his agreement – which has been received.

This has been a long process, but it has been important not to rush through it. Each stage has included the space for reflection to avoid jumping to any conclusions. Any change to patterns of Mass can be deeply disruptive – people are used to things being in a certain way, and change is often unsettling. At the same time, for many people the pattern as it stands was deeply lacking and there is a widespread view was that it had been imposed without consultation beforehand (obviously I cannot speak to this, as it was long before I came to the parish).

I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the consultation process. Your views have been central to the decision making process, this began because of the views which parishioners expressed and the decisions made have been on the basis of the thoughts which you put forward. I would also like to thank you for your patience, I know that it has taken longer than many would like, but I do feel strongly that taking time to reflect and seek the best option given the circumstances as they are, was worth it.

At the heart of the problem is a situation which is affecting a great many Catholic parishes across the country. Where once a parish would have had a single priest, or possibly even a priest assisted by a curate, it now finds that its priest is shared. This situation is only going to continue and become more severe as a large number of priests enter into well-deserved retirement but significantly fewer are ordained. This is part of the basis behind the listening process initiated by the Bishop regarding the future of the Diocese; to listen to people and then seek to discern how best to deal with the resources which are available.

There was a clear preference for Sunday morning Masses; in particular a number of people in both parishes expressed concern about traveling to Saturday evening vigil Masses during the darker months. There is a desire to engage with children and young families in both parishes, and again Saturday evenings are less ideal for this. At the same time, there are only a given number of hours in any day, and by the time Mass is celebrated and the quarter hour (at least) journey between the two churches is made, it's impossible to have services too close to each other, especially if I am to have the space to meet with parishioners after Masses.

As I indicated, this has not been an easy decision to make and all of the considerations above (along with various others) have fed into the new schedule. This will involve a change for everybody, but I hope that we can make it in a positive spirit. It also will not satisfy everybody's desires and hopes, that is something which is impossible. But I hope that it will represent a suitable compromise which can allow our parishes to remain and deepen as genuine communities of Christ's body.

The times of Masses seemed not to be the issue, and therefore these will not change. There will be a Saturday evening vigil Mass at 6.30pm, and on Sundays a Parish Mass at 9.30am and the Ordinariate Mass at 11.30am. What will change, however, is where these will be celebrated; the Saturday 6.30 Mass, and Sunday 9.30 Mass will start to alternate between Barnard Castle and Gainford. This means that each week both parishes will have Mass, but in each place, on one week it will be a vigil Mass and the next a Sunday morning Mass. So that other issues (not least the unique pattern of Easter services) do not confuse this, we will be starting the new pattern from the beginning of May.

We will allow the new pattern to run for a while, before reviewing how it is working. It will inevitably need some time to bed in, but we will be seeking to learn better what works well and whether it can be improved. If any of you have any questions or concerns, please do feel free to speak to me about it. Again, thank you for your patience with this process, and thank you to all who have engaged to help the process be one which is genuinely informed by the people of these parishes. **Fr. Thomas.**

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

