

St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

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

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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, Bernadette Wyr, 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.

A FILM FOR LENT: The Hogarth Partnership film 'THE LAST SUPPER' will be shown in St Augustine's Parish Centre on Sunday 24th March at 3pm. There is no entry charge but a basket will be available for donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee.

Summary of Listening Exercises, Result of Questionnaire and Bishop Stephen's Response

On our diocesan website <https://diocesehn.org.uk/> you will find all the summaries from the various listening exercises that have been running since the summer of 2023, and the results of the Questionnaire for the Dicastery of Bishops Report from March 2023. These are together with Bishop Stephen's response to what has been presented to him. He reflects on the past, present and our future together. The documentation is necessarily lengthy. Too lengthy for a pastoral letter.



The 5th Sunday of Lent

Theme: Life out of death

'And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.'

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

Many thanks for your generosity

Last week's cake sale was a great success – in total bringing in £246.95...not to mention bringing great joy to the eaters of such delicious and beautiful cakes. Thank you to everybody who baked and who ate.

The second Lent lunch was also a success, between the two they raised £240. Thank you to all who worked to prepare, serve, clear up, and simply share time together over food.

Both of these raised funds for First Stop Darlington, a local charity doing excellent work – see their website for more details: <https://firststopdarlington.org.uk>

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.

Welcome Msgr. Keith

Today we are joined by Msgr. Keith Newton, Ordinary of the Ordinariate, who is making his regular visitation.

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**5th Sunday of Lent****17th March****First reading Jeremiah 31:31-34****I will write my Law in their hearts**

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

Responsorial Psalm 50(51):3-4,12-15**A pure heart create for me, O God.**

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.

Second reading Hebrews 5:7-9**He learned to obey and he became the source of eternal salvation**

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

Gospel Acclamation Jn12:26

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.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

Whoever serves me must follow me, says the Lord;
and where I am, there also will my servant be.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**Gospel John 12:20-33****If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest**

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, ‘Sir, we should like to see Jesus.’ Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life.

If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.

Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say:

Father, save me from this hour?

But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name!’ A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, ‘It was an angel speaking to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. ‘Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.’

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

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Feast Days this week

Monday 18th March: St Patrick (Ireland)

Tuesday 19th March: St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Wednesday 20th March: St Cuthbert

International Day of Happiness

Saturday 23rd March: St Turibius of Mongrovejo

Reflection on the Readings**5th Sunday of Lent****17th March**

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.

For Others' Sake

Martin Luther King once wrote about a time when he knelt in prayer in the kitchen of his home in Alabama. Stones had been thrown through the window because of his call for civil rights for black people. His wife and children were in danger. He was already a respected academic and a promising career lay ahead. In prayer he found himself asking if it was right to put himself and them in danger? It was in that moment he decided to put the will of God and the welfare of his people before his own security and that of his family. He chose to serve God by working for those who were most oppressed. In a sense, he chose to die so that others could more fully live. It was a striking echo of what Jesus says in the gospel reading, that the grain of wheat must fall into the ground to yield a rich harvest.

Jesus himself was the supreme expression of this principle. He is the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in dying yields a harvest of life. He describes that harvest in prophetic words: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself."

If God worked powerfully through the life of Jesus, He worked even more powerfully through the death of Jesus, a death that reveals the power of God's love, even more fully than his life of healing and ministry, for the amazing love revealed in his death on the cross drew people to God, and continues to do so. Over the centuries, millions of people, by looking upon the crucifix, have experienced God's personal love and compassion and found themselves drawn to God in return. In accepting the loss of so much that was dear to him, in particular, his vibrant life and warm companionship with others, Jesus drew people of all nations to himself and, thereby, to sharing in God's life.

It was when some Greeks (i.e. foreigners) came to hear him speak that Jesus made this declaration; and then he asked: "What shall I say? Save me from this hour. No, it was for this reason I have come to this hour." In these lovely spring days we may find ourselves sowing some seeds in the garden. The seed that dies in order to yield a new form of life is as familiar to us today as it was in the day of Jesus. This phenomenon of nature can speak to our own experience as much as it did to the experience of Jesus. Each of us in different ways has to accept some significant loss if we are to remain true to our deepest and best self, true to what God is asking of us.

Then there are other losses in life that we do not choose, but that are forced upon us. These are losses we have no choice but to accept. We may have to accept the loss of people we love and care about because of choices they make themselves. Parents may not wish to see a son or daughter go far away to live and work, but they accept this necessary loss out of respect for the one they love. In accepting the losses that life imposes, in letting go of those we love, we often find something fuller and richer, just as Jesus' disciples received him again in a new and fuller way through his resurrection from the dead and the sending of the Spirit.

At the end, for each of us, there is the final, unavoidable struggle to let go of our very life, with all the loss that is entailed in that. As we face of all these inevitable losses that are integral to life, we are strengthened by the words of Jesus in today's gospel, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." We trust and believe that, at the end of the day, after we have struggled through all our losses, the Lord will draw us to himself, and, when that happens, we will lack nothing. associationofcatholicpriests.ie

The Cycle of Prayer**Survivors of Sexual Abuse**

especially on Friday of 5th Week of Lent

Background

It was a survivor of clerical child sexual abuse who, in fact, first made the proposal to the Commission for a "Day of Prayer" for all survivors of abuse. The Members then tasked the Working Group on Theology and Spirituality with drawing up the proposal. The Members accepted the proposal at the February 2016, Plenary Assembly and submitted it to Pope Francis for his approval.

The Holy Father welcomed the initiative and has asked that each episcopal conference choose an appropriate day in their nation or territory to hold a "Day of Prayer" for the survivors of sexual abuse.

Prayer

*Father, since your mercy has been revealed
in the tenderness of your Son Jesus Christ,
who said to his disciples:*

*'Suffer the little children to come unto me',
we pray that your Church may be a secure home
where all children and vulnerable adults are brought closer to
your Beloved Son.*

*May all those who have been abused
physically, emotionally and sexually by your ministers,
be respected and accompanied by tangible gestures of justice and
reparation*

so that they may feel healed with the balm of your compassion.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Pontifical Commission

Looking at the weekday Masses recently it is striking that there have been very few Saints celebrated; quite properly the season of Lent gets a predominance which means that only the more important Saints get the full celebration. This week though, two of the Saints manage to get their heads above the parapet. On Wednesday we celebrate S. Cuthbert, our great local Saint, patron of both the Diocese and of County Durham itself; clearly not a major Saint everywhere, but for us here he certainly is. On Tuesday S. Joseph is celebrated, by contrast he is one of the highest celebration right across the world, acknowledging his vital role in Christ's incarnation, and therefore of our redemption.

One point which may seem surprising is how late this celebration of S. Joseph began. In the early years of the Church, even as other figures like the Apostles and early Martyrs were given feasts S. Joseph was acknowledged as a Saint, but not given a feast day. In a significant way, this can be seen as fitting – in his life he showed an incredible humility. If we look through Scriptures he is completely silent, he certainly acts, but he never speaks. We know nothing about his death (though there are various traditions), and we do not have any of his actual relics (though a cloak belonging to him is claimed). He seems willing, almost eager to hide away in obscurity – doing the job he was given by God, but not seeking any of the glory for himself.

That job was absolutely essential. As Our Lady brought the infant Christ into the world, for her to have been (in modern parlance) a single mother would have been inconceivable, it would have been seen as proof of an illicit relationship. A figure who could be seen by the outside world as Christ's father spared both Our Lord and Our Lady shame in a culture which saw these are important. But at the same time, that a man would be willing to take that dramatic step backwards, and to raise this child as his own requires a great depth of faith on his part. We read from S. Matthew how he discovered that Our Lady was pregnant; clearly he knew that this was not his child, but even before he was told that this was from God, he was planning to spare her disgrace. Once he had been informed what it was all about, he took up his role and worked strenuously to ensure the best for both Our Lady and Our Lord.

He is present at the early events of Christ's life – at his birth, his presentation in the Temple, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and when he was lost in the Temple aged 12. No doubt during those years he would have been a significant influence on the child's life; many statues and images of him show him holding the child precisely because of that nurturing role. But yet once Christ's public ministry begins he has vanished; it is universally assumed that he had died by this point, and again his humility is shown. He has fulfilled his mission, and now can leave the stage.

But he has never been forgotten, and because of that exceptional humility, that magnificent completion of his mission from God, he is now exalted as one of the great Saints in heaven...no doubt still showing humility in his worship of God, including that Son whom he raised and cherished.

As we celebrate and reflect on S. Joseph, we would do well to imitate him. He was a man of action when needed – undertaking the difficult and dangerous journey into Egypt. But he was always open to the will of God, being receptive when God spoke to him and guided him. In all things, he put God and his work first; not seeking recognition, but simply doing what was asked of him. May his powerful intercession assist us all as we seek to do the same. **Fr. Thomas.**

Easter services

As in previous years, the main services for the Triduum are going to be celebrated jointly with Barnard Castle and the Ordinariate, this year they take place at Barnard Castle. Any singers who would be willing to join a gathered choir, please let Fr. Thomas know.

Thursday 28 March – Maundy Thursday

11am, S. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle – Chrism Mass 7pm

S. Mary's, Barnard Castle – Mass of the Lord's Supper (followed by the watch until midnight)

Friday 29 March – Good Friday

11am, S. Mary's Church of England Church/village green – Churches Together in Gainford service

3pm, **S. Mary's, Barnard Castle – Good Friday liturgy**

6pm, S. Osmund's – Stations of the Cross

Saturday 30 March – Holy Saturday

8.30pm, S. Mary's Barnard Castle – Easter Vigil

Sunday 31 March – Easter Day

9.30am, S. Osmund's – Easter Day Mass

Best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy week ahead

