

Masses and Intentions this week

Saturday 21st March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Sylvia Thompson
Sunday 22nd March	Fourth Sunday of Lent	Helen & Douglas Cone
Monday 23rd March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Elizabeth Dymond
Tuesday 24th March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Meg Jones
Wednesday 25th March	<i>The Annunciation of the Lord</i>	“Pro Populo”
Thursday 26th March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Joyce Gonsalves
Friday 27th March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Bryan McGurk
Saturday 28th March	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	Joyce Gonsalves
Sunday 29th March	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Deceased Members of Aitken & Edwards Families



The Pope's Intentions March 2020

Catholics in China: We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

Diocesan Justice & Peace Project


Thank you for your continuing donations to the Diocesan Justice and Peace Project. As a result of the coronavirus situation there have been changes to the Project and they can no longer hand out clothes and bedding. During this exceptional period **PLEASE DO NOT DONATE CLOTHES OR BEDDING.** For the moment, whilst the project remains open, they are grateful for any food donations. Food and Financial donations are urgently needed. Due to restrictions in supermarkets and limited attendance at churches, our food supplies are diminishing quickly. They are very happy to receive any of the following: Biscuits, Coffee, Sugar, Chick Peas, Salt, Teabags, Cooking Oil, Tinned Fish, Baked Beans, Tinned Tomatoes, Spaggetti, Toothpaste and Soap.

St Robert's SVP

Meetings of St Robert's SVP Conference and all visiting by Conference members are cancelled until further notice because of Coronavirus. The only activity which is continuing for the time being is the collection of food (no clothes or bedding) for the Asylum Seekers project in Newcastle, while that is still running. We appreciate that this is a time when the need for support to many of our housebound and elderly parishioners is greater than ever and are very sad that because of the age profile of current members we are not able to offer that support. The situation emphasises the urgent need for younger people to join the SVP so that it can keep going now and into the future. If anyone is able to consider doing this please contact the current President - Gerry Harber - by telephone on ☎ 01670 517829.



Wansbeck Valley Food Bank

Please don't forget the WVFB at this time, when need is likely to be greater than ever. Examples of suitable items include:  Tins of: garden peas, potatoes, tomatoes, fruit, rice pudding or meat (eg. Mince, stew, chicken, steak). Packets of potato mash, tea bags (packs of 40 or 80), long life milk, packets of custard, biscuits, jam, toilet rolls, shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste and small bars of chocolate would be gratefully received.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Unfortunately the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes at the end of July has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus and associated uncertainties and risks. Tangney Tours will be contacting all those who have booked to travel and have promised a full refund to those who have paid. This has been a very difficult decision for those who organise the pilgrimage but in light of the situation we are currently in feel that it is correct decision.

Christian Aid News

The latest edition of Christian Aid News is available on the stand in St Robert's Church porch. It is free, so please take one home and read it. It contains important information about the very real effects of Climate Change on people in the developing countries, and what we need to do urgently to mitigate this crisis. We must respond to the cry of those in desperate need.

Pilgrimage to Holy Island

To coincide with the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Oscar Romero (24th March 2020) a one-day pilgrimage to Holy Island (Lindisfarne) taking place on Saturday 4th April. This pilgrimage will be a day with prayer and liturgy, a film, dance performance and a pilgrim walk around the island. Safe crossing times for the causeway mean that all participants need to be on Holy Island no later than 10:30am and the Welcome Gathering and Prayer will begin in the Anglican Parish Church of Mary the Virgin at 11am. The day will end around 5pm after an ecumenical service and key-note address. The day is sponsored by the Romero Trust, with the collaboration of CAFOD staff and volunteers in the North East and Br Ken Vance S.J. organising Scottish participation. The key-note speaker is Edgardo Colon-Emeric, a Methodist theology professor at Duke University in North Carolina.

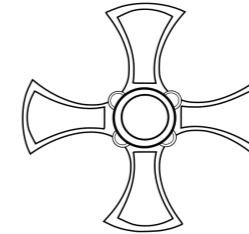
Confessions

Confessions are cancelled until further notice. Please contact Fr Peter by e-mail or telephone if you are in urgent need of the sacrament so that he can make arrangements to help you.



PRAYER FASTING ALMSGIVING

**Saint Bede's
Catholic Church**
Catholic Row
BEDLINGTON
NE22 6HS



**Saint Robert of Newminster
Catholic Church**
Oldgate
MORPETH
NE61 1QF

PARISHES OF THE BRINKBURN PARTNERSHIP, NORTHUMBERLAND

Parish Priest: Father Peter Stott

St Robert's Presbytery, Collingwood House, Oldgate, Morpeth NE61 1QF
Tel 01670 513410 | Email morpeth.strobertnewminster@rcdhn.org.uk | peterjstott@aol.com

Parish Deacon: Reverend Stephen Boulter

St Bede's Presbytery, Catholic Row, Bedlington, NE22 6HS
Tel 01670 823258 | Email bedlington.stbede@rcdhn.org.uk

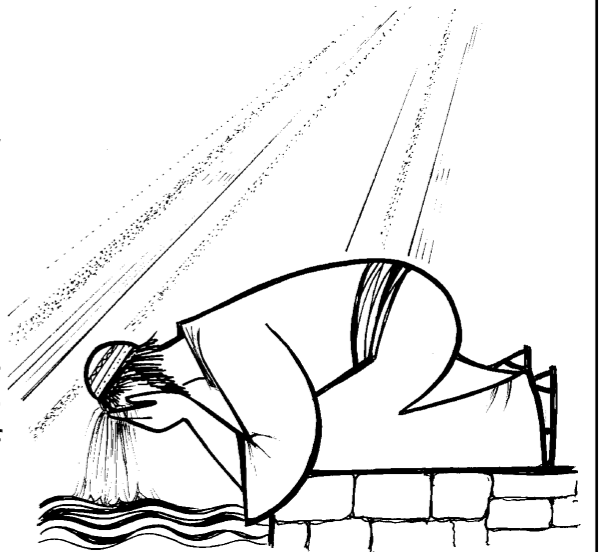
www.strobertsmorpeth.com | www.stbedesbedlington.co.uk | Northumberland Listening Service 07732 980740

Sunday 22nd March 2020 — Fourth Sunday of Lent

Today Jesus cures a man who has been blind from birth, but it is not the blindness of the man himself that is central to this story but the blindness of those around him.

The Pharisees are pretty sure they know who Jesus is and they are fairly certain that he is not of God. Consequently they are completely non-plussed by Jesus' miracle. They question the cured man over and over as though seeking some other explanation. The Pharisees are unable to believe the evidence before their eyes. They are just as blind as the blind man once was. They are blind to the truth because they refuse to see it.

Jesus chose to cure the blind man, not simply because he felt a sympathy for him but because he wanted to display how God can work through any one of us. Jesus could see that the blind man would make a persuasive evangelist, and he was right. The cured blind man, unlike his frightened parents, spoke out boldly and persistently first proclaiming Jesus as a prophet, and then as he gained more insight, that this man was the Son of God. Even so, the short-sighted Pharisees were not convinced. Their belief that only Moses could act as spokesperson for God, rendered them totally myopic when it came to Jesus.



Perhaps there is a lesson here for all of us. Are we so blinkered in what we believe and how we worship, that we are unable to see the broader picture that would allow our faith to move forwards?

Jesus' miracle and choice of subject, teaches that God can work through any one of us. In the circumstances of our lives we can show others how God works. In our skills and talents we too can be evangelists, we just need the vision and a little bit of lateral thinking.

Following guidelines given by the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales the following applies to all Catholic Churches in the United Kingdom with effect from the evening of Friday 20th March 2020 until further notice.

Sunday and Weekday Masses

There will be no public Sunday or Weekday Masses celebrated in any of our churches until public gatherings are restored by the UK Government. The Parish Priest will continue to celebrate Mass in the Parish but without a congregation (no parishioners, deacons or altar servers being present). The continuing celebration of Masses ensures that Mass Intentions will continue to be offered, including the obligatory Pro Populo Masses for the people of the parish. Parishioners are asked to join in the celebration of Mass at home by making a Spiritual Communion (Catechism of the Catholic Church N.1364).

Private Prayer in Church

This week, both St Roberts Church and St Bede's Church will be open for private prayer throughout the day, from 9am—4pm. We will assess this throughout the week to see if this should continue.

The Sacrament of Baptism

All Baptisms will be deferred until the Government announces the restoration of public gatherings. In case of necessity, baptisms will be celebrated with all the necessary hygiene precautions. Families who have made baptism arrangements will be contacted by each Parish.

First Holy Communion Masses

These celebrations are postponed until a time that allows for families to gather safely within the Parish. New dates will be announced when it is safe to do so.

Weddings

The Sacrament of Matrimony is deferred until the time when congregations are permitted to gather.

Holy Week and the Sacraments of Initiation

These celebrations will depend on the forthcoming decisions of the Bishops for the Holy Week ceremonies. The Parish Priest will contact those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation in due course.

Sacrament of Confirmation

The celebration of Confirmation will be deferred until the Government announces that congregations can resume public worship, although none were planned here at this time

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

No pastoral visits will be made to people except in an emergency. However, parishes and their ministers will offer phone support. The Anointing of the Sick will be carried out by the Priest who will avoid physical contact and adhere to hygiene procedures. Visits to people in care homes or hospitals will follow advice from the staff on infection control.

Holy Communion to the Sick and Housebound

Since many Eucharistic Ministers are over the age of 70, Holy Communion and pastoral visits are suspended for the foreseeable future, and phone support will be offered.

Funerals

Requiem Masses and Funerals Services in Church are not permitted. Funeral Services will only be conducted at the graveside or crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the cemetery or crematorium authorities. The Parish Priest and funeral director will work together to support families who are experiencing bereavement.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confession may be offered on request only, as long as hygiene and social distancing requirements are observed - ie a physical barrier between the penitent and the priest such as a grille and veil.



Please pray for: Peace on Earth, Racial Justice Day, Christian Unity, Victims of Human Trafficking, The Sick and those who care for them, The Unemployed, Candidates for the Sacraments, Women, The Needy and Hungry of the World, Penitents and Wanderers, Survivors of Sexual Abuse. Please pray for those who are sick and unwell, for all who have died recently including **Betty Dymond** [Morpeth] whose Funeral takes place at Blyth Crematorium on Thursday; for **Bryan McGurk** [Morpeth] whose Funeral Service takes place at Blyth Crematorium on Friday; for **Eileen Elizabeth Richardson** [Morpeth] whose Funeral Service will be held at the Graveside at Pegswood Cemetery on 30th March; and for all whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Offertory Collections 14th / 15th March

St Bede's: £238.16 / St Robert's £519.87

Newsletter Items

This newsletter will probably change its format in the coming weeks as there may be very little information or news to include but we will continue to keep you informed about the important things. If you have anything for the newsletter, please e-mail items for the parish newsletter by 7pm on Wednesday to the parish office email address at St Robert's ... morpeth.strobertnewminster@rcdhn.org.uk

Communicating with Fr Peter or Deacon Stephen

Fr Peter and Deacon Stephen are still around trying to adjust to life without public Masses and Services and Deacon Stephen is continuing his work in the Northumbria NHS Trust. However, it would be appreciated that if you wish to communicate with them or with Bernadette at St Robert's Parish Office, that you contact them by e-mail or telephone, rather than face to face to reduce the risk of infection by Coronavirus. The same is true of contacting any of the Hospital Chaplains at this time.

Newsletter

We will continue to provide a Newsletter with the Mass intentions and any other news appropriate. This will be available online on our websites. If however, you would prefer to receive a pdf version as an email directly to you, please send your email address into Fr Peter and we will set up a Mailing List for the newsletter each week during the time that we are not gathering to celebrate Mass together.

Using our Website and Facebook Pages

The best and easiest way to find out what is happening in our parishes during this difficult time is to use the website of our Parishes and the Facebook pages that we have. Obviously this means that you have to have access to the internet, either through a home computer, tablet or Ipad or Apple or Android mobile phone. The website currently have information there that will help to keep you in touch with the Church, locally, nationally and internationally and we will continue updating the websites and Facebook pages as the weeks advance. The website addresses are on the front page of this newsletter.

Magnificat Online

The Magnificat monthly Missal is a great help to prayer, with a version of Morning and Evening Prayer and the text for Daily Mass. During this time, when we are unable to attend public Mass, they are offering a FREE online version at www.magnificat.com/free. This is a great aid to help prayer at home and to follow Mass alongside an online streamed Mass.

Mass Online

While we do not have facilities to broadcast Mass, there are many online Masses to watch and follow and pray along, with to enable you to make a Spiritual Communion at this time. Information about this is being placed onto the Parish Websites ... some of these are available on ...

www.churchservices.tv

www.mcnmedia.tv

www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass

www.ewtn.com

www.catholicstv.org

"Universalis" App for iOS and android phones

These links and more will be added to our website

St Mary's Cathedral online

St Mary's Cathedral Newcastle will be streaming Mass every day during the suspension of public Masses ... www.youtube.com/channel/UC12EvW0Egq-cFT5i2y_EQw/videos

Partnership Masses

The Partnership Station Masses for Lent are cancelled and the Mass with Confessions on Saturday 4th April is also cancelled.

Your Church Offering

Some of you may be wondering what to do about your weekly offering to the Church. Obviously, we are not going to tell you to forget about it!!! If you are passing the Presbytery, you can place it in an envelope and put it through the letter box. We ask that you do not leave Offering Envelopes just lying in the church hoping that they may be found and collected! If you are not attending church and not even venturing out because of the Government guidance, why not follow the example of many others and set up a Standing Order, so that your donation will just be taken out of your bank account

Lenten Lunches

Unfortunately the Lenten Lunches have been cancelled, but thanks to those who attended we have so far collected **£360.65** [1st March £75.05; 8th March £131.80; 13th March £153.80] Thank you very much to everyone who supported this for CAFOD and Mary's Meals. You can still make donations by placing offerings in an envelope and dropping into St Robert's Presbytery Letterbox marked CAFOD or Mary's Meals.

Lenten Alms

Although we cannot meet at Mass and hold our collections for Lenten Alms, St Cuthbert's Care still need our donations. Envelopes for St Cuthbert's Care can be handed in to the Presbytery for Lenten Alms or follow the instructions on their website: stcuthbertscare.org.uk/support/indexDonate.php

Catholic Women's League

All CWL meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Easter My Day by Day

The Easter edition of "My Day by Day" is now available at St Robert's Church.

Rededication of England to Mary

Next Sunday was meant to be a day of celebration consecrating England to the Dowry of Mary, with special services being held in churches through England. Because of the situation we currently find ourselves in this will not be possible. However, the prayers needed will be added to our Parish Websites for you to open or download and to use at home. They are also available on the Walsingham website.