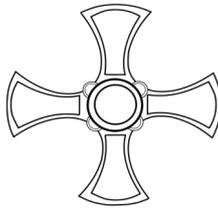


**Saint Bede's
Catholic Church**
Catholic Row
BEDLINGTON
NE22 6HS



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

PARISHES OF THE BRINKBURN PARTNERSHIP, NORTHUMBERLAND

Parish Priest: Father Peter J 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 3rd January 2021 — 2nd Sunday after Christmas

“From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain.”

[Ecclesiasticus 24:8]

All the best books have great beginnings, and St. John's gospel is no exception. The gospel begins with an eighteen-verse introduction, which we call 'The Prologue'. The prologue contains intriguing themes such as creation, life, and truth. Through it all, John refers to Jesus as the 'Word'. If John had been writing today, would he have used different language? To us the word 'Word' is simply a means of expression. In John's day the word 'Word' had greater implication. To understand today's gospel, we need to know that in Hebrew Scriptures the 'Word' had a power of its own. The 'Word' was not just a sound or an expression, but something with its own life. The 'Word' was an agent of creation. We can see this for ourselves in Genesis. 'God said, "Let there be light," and light appeared.' God's 'Word' has the power to create. To call Jesus the 'Word' was to attribute to him the ability to make things happen.



We can bring our own understanding of the 'Word' to help us understand this gospel. Our own understanding of words is of language, understanding and communication. Perhaps to describe Jesus as the 'Word' is to imply that he was sent as a communication between God and us.

How would we have recorded the beginning of Jesus' public ministry? We may have been tempted to record his great deeds as any well-trained newspaper reporter may have done. We may have been tempted to place him in a political or historical context worthy of any great public figure. John however, begins his gospel by placing Jesus fairly and squarely at the centre of creation itself. The story starts with the bold statement that Jesus is the meaning behind creation, life and truth. It's a great beginning. Can we put down John's gospel; tell ourselves this has no relevance in our lives or do we keep turning the pages.

“In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

[John 1:1]

NEWSLETTERS AND MISALLETTES: If you are holding this Newsletter, or a Mass Sheet, as a paper copy in Church on Sunday, please remember that you **MUST** take it away with you. COVID-19 guidelines state that because you have handled it, you cannot just put it back on the table at the back of Church. Its handy to have a Newsletter at home and good to reflect on today's readings in the Missalette! If you do not wish to keep it, please leave it in your bench and it will be immediately destroyed by those who will tidy and clean the Church after Mass.



During Advent and Christmastime, please pray for: Openness to the Word of God; Migrants and Refugees; and Expectant Mothers. Please pray for family members, parishioners, those we know who are unwell; for those in hospital, recovering from or awaiting surgery and for all suffering from COVID-19. We pray for all who have died recently, including **John Mills** of Choppington, whose Requiem Mass will be celebrated on Friday 8th January at St Bede's Church; for **Joan Oliver** [Morpeth] who died this week and whose Requiem Mass will be celebrated at St Robert's Church on 14th January; for all who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Morpeth Churches Together

The Clergy and Ministers of the church communities in Morpeth have put together a Christmas Message which can be accessed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/p-Atop6h8UM> or check out the Parish Facebook page where it can also be accessed.

Collections, Standing Orders and BACS Payments



Many thanks to all who are regularly contributing to our collections once again. You can place your offering in the baskets at the back of Church at Mass; you can drop your Offertory Envelopes through the Presbytery letterbox or make an online BACS donation or set up a Standing Order for a regular payment. Also many thanks to those who continue their regular Standing Orders. It is very much appreciated. Please contact the Parish Office at Morpeth for more details.

Happy New Year

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year, as we begin the first full week of 2021. The last year was probably the strangest and possibly the hardest one some of us have ever lived through. Our churches are not the same at the moment as we limit our numbers to enable us to observe safe social distancing. Our faith has been challenged as we have been encouraged to live out our faith without being able to practice our weekly attendance at Mass. We lost some lovely people in our parishes and in our families during the last year and that has been very hard for us all, especially as our Funerals were curtailed because of the virus. The social side of parish life has been wiped out, hopefully only a temporary measure, as we are unable to gather for tea and coffee and other gatherings. We have gone through tough times. But, we move forward with faith and trust in God and with the prayers of his blessed mother Mary, May this coming year of 2021 be a much better one for us and may we all meet again one day soon to rebuild our parish communities.



Father Peter

St Robert's Church Organ Repairs

Repairs to the Church Organ at St Robert's Church are due to begin on Tuesday 5th January. It will be dismantled and the main parts taken away for cleaning and refurbishment. The contractors will be on site for one week, and then return to rebuild the organ and put everything together on 15th February for three weeks. This work will affect the times of weekday Mass at St Robert's Church during those weeks.



IMPORTANT NOTE ... Help with Financial Matters

Fr Peter is seeking help at St Bede's Parish with two things -

1. **The Parish Accounts** ... someone who can prepare a monthly Report for the Parish Finance Committee and an Annual Report for the Diocesan Finance Office.
2. **The Gift Aid Scheme.** We need someone who would be willing to take on the preparing of the Parish Collection Envelopes and Boxes; the auditing of all donations that are received through the Gift Aid Scheme and of liaising with the Diocesan Gift Aid Office on these matters and preparing reports.

These two roles are needed fairly urgently, so if anyone can help, please let Fr Peter know as soon as possible, or have a word, if vaguely interested to find out what is involved!!

Feast of the Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany will be celebrated on Wednesday 6th January. Although normally a Holyday of Obligation, there is still no obligation attached to these Masses at the moment, but there will be **Mass at 10.00am at St Bede's and 12.00pm at St Robert's** on that day, under the current restrictions.



Change of Mass Times

Please note that there are a few Mass time changes this week in both churches; and, as from Friday 15th January, the time of Mass on a Friday at St Bede's Church will go back to 10am, rather than 7pm.

Silent Nights in Bethlehem - Friends of the Holy Land Appeal

Christmas 2020: the hotels are empty. The streets are silent. There are usually over a million pilgrims and tourists in the Holy Land at this time of year. But coronavirus restrictions have completely shut down the Holy Land's  tourist industry. No Christmas tourism means no income for 80% of the people in Bethlehem. There is no Furlough Scheme in the West Bank and many people have been left with no job, no income. You can support a Holy Land family through the crisis this Christmas with a gift of £20, £50, £100, or whatever you can afford. Until the pilgrims and tourists return, it may be the only lifeline they get. Thank you so much. For more information about us, please visit: www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 2021

- 10 Day Pilgrimage, 12th - 22nd October 2021.
- Flights - Newcastle via Heathrow to Tel Aviv with British Airways.
- Accommodation: 3 nights in Bethlehem, 3 nights in Tiberias and 4 nights in Jerusalem
- £1,827 per person
- Insurance and Single Supplement are extra.
- Information from Fr Peter or from Tangney Tours, ☎ 01732 88 66 66, during office hours, after Christmas.



Mass Intentions

 We have a very long delay at St Robert's Parish for Mass Intentions, with dates now only available for mid-March, as January and February are full. We ask for your patience. At St Bede's, please hand in Mass Intentions as normal, but please note that they are being sorted from St Robert's through the Parish Office there, for the time being. This should not make any difference to the way Masses are offered at St Bede's Church.

The Year of St Joseph

At the beginning of December, Pope Francis announced a Year of St Joseph, which will run from 8th December this year until 8th December 2021. Pope Francis published an Apostolic Letter, "Patris corde" "With a father's heart" - In which he describes St Joseph, the guardian of Our Lord as beloved, tender and loving, obedient, accepting father; one, who is both courageous and industrious, content to live and work "in the shadows" while he protected and provided for our Lord and Our Lady. The Letter concludes with a special Prayer to St Joseph...



*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

The Northern Catholic Calendar

Copies of The Northern Catholic Calendar are now available. This is the handbook for our diocese and lists all churches, parishes, priests, religious houses and associations in the diocese. If you wish to buy a copy they are £3 each and can be collected at the Parish Office at St Robert's on Tuesday and Thursday mornings / at St Bede's after Mass [Please try to have the correct payment of £3]

Coming to Mass - You must book your place

To book your place at Mass at St Bede's Church

Please call St Bede's Presbytery ☎ 01670 823 258

any evening from 6.30pm - 8.30pm

To book your place at Mass at St Robert's Church

Please call St Robert's Presbytery ☎ 01670 513 410

Monday - Friday 9am - 6pm

If you have already booked a place, but then find that you are unable to attend, please cancel your booking as soon as possible.

Places of Worship in 'TIER 4'

As we have now moved into COVID-19 Tier 4 restrictions for the foreseeable future, the Government website gives this information on Places of Worship

Places of worship

You can attend places of worship for a service. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble. You should maintain strict social distancing at all times.

Coronavirus and how we keep ourselves safe

As the Covid-19 Coronavirus changes and is more transmissible, so too our actions must reflect the need to protect ourselves and those around us, especially when coming to church. It is more important than ever that we follow the guidelines below. If we follow all the guidelines below, we should keep each other safe...

- Church will open 15 minutes before Mass begins.
- Wear a face mask; sanitize your hands on entry at the Church; check your name and contact number with the stewards; scan the QR code on the NHS Contact Tracing App on your smartphone; wait for one of our stewards to lead you to your seat, please do not go on your own; please sit in the place shown to you by the stewards; Please remain in the seat you have been shown to ... please don't "shuffle" along the bench, as you could 'contaminate' the whole bench by your action, nor should you move to another seat!
- At St Bede's Church, please do not cross through other benches, so that we can avoid cross contamination. Use the aisles to come forward. Do not to touch any benches, or pew ends, other than the one you are sitting in to avoid any possibility of cross contamination of the virus.
- Holy Communion is distributed at the end of Mass after the final blessing. Stewards will let you know when to move from your bench; Holy Communion is to be received in the Hand only to avoid any possible touching of the tongue and possible cross-contamination; stretch out your hands as far as possible to maintain a social distance with the priest; Holy Communion is distributed in silence; after receiving Holy Communion, you are asked to leave Church; please do not return to your bench.
- Remember to follow the Social Distancing rules inside and outside Church. You should only be in close contact with those you live with or those in your "bubble". 
- Do not lean in to one another to talk to fellow parishioners, nor attempt to shake hands or touch others. Keep a safe distance between you and any other person you do not live with.
- You are asked not to congregate immediately outside of the Church doors, so that everyone has the opportunity to walk out of church in a socially distanced manner, without feeling uncomfortable. Wear your face coverings until such time that you are not in the vicinity of the church buildings.
- Please remember that if you are feeling unwell or have symptoms of coronavirus, you must not to come to Church.
- If you need assistance, you should bring someone from your own household or bubble to assist you.



Going into Hospital

If you are admitted into Hospital, it is important to remind ward staff of your religion, so that the chaplains can pick this up before they start their visits. More and more often, the catholic chaplains are coming upon catholic patients whose religion is not recorded and there is a possibility you might not be visited by the chaplain, because they don't know you're there. Please remember to make sure your religion is recorded when admitted.

Requiem Masses and Funeral Services

Under Tier 4 Restrictions, the number able to attend a Funeral remains at 30 people. To attend a Requiem Mass or a Service in Church, you have to be asked by the family to attend and the family are asked to provide, through the Funeral Director, a Track and Trace Sheet of those attending. If it is a service at the Crematorium, the same rules apply and the local authority need a Track and Trace list of those who will be there. Congregational singing is not allowed, but we can provide organists to play hymns during the funerals if this is requested.

Confessions

Please note changes to the times of Confession

- St Robert's (in Sacristy): **Saturday, 10.45am - 11.00am.**
- St Bede's Church Hall: **Saturday, 5pm- 5.20pm**
- Confession is also available on request.
- All confession are face to face at the moment.

SVP Donations

The Society of St Vincent de Paul are unable to hold their normal church door collections at the moment because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since last March they have relied solely on donations. If you can help please place an offering in an envelope and drop off at Mass or at the Presbytery for the SVP.



Missio Red Boxes - St Bede's

Many thanks to Red Mission Box holders who have been able to hand in their boxes to Church. Your emptied boxes are now available to collect from the narthex at St Bede's Church. Please continue to bring boxes to Church until we are allowed to resume normal collections! In the meantime, thank you and stay safe.



Newsletter by Email

If you would like to go onto our mailing list for the Newsletter please send your email address to Fr Peter at St Robert's and you will be added and it will be emailed each weekend. A limited number of paper copies are available in both churches, which can be picked up if you come to church.



The Wednesday Word

The Wednesday Word website contains reflections on the forthcoming Sunday readings for both adults and children and can be accessed at wednesdayword.org Using this website can be a good way to prepare for Sunday Mass and reflect on the readings.



Marys Meals - "Double the Love"

Marys Meals is delighted to announce that the UK Government has pledged to double any donation made to Mary's Meals before 31st January 2021, up to £2m. So if you make a donation anytime before the end of January, your donation will be doubled. You can read more about this on Marys Meals' website www.marysmeals.org.uk/doublethelove #UKAidMatch



Northumberland Listening Service

The Northumberland Listening Service has been running for several years, set up by the local catholic parishes in Northumberland, and has helped many people during that time. If there is something troubling you, if you feel affected by the difficulties around us with coronavirus, or trying to "get back to normal" or if there is any other issue troubling you that you need to talk to someone about, the number is "Northumberland Listening Service" ☎ 07732 980740.

Celebrating a Baptism

We can celebrate Baptisms at the moment but they must follow these rules - no more than 6 attending (inc Baby) and from one household or support bubble. This will be difficult for some, but if anyone does still wish to have their child baptised, please contact the Parish Office.



Masses and Intentions this week

	St Robert of Newminster Church Morpeth	St Bede's Church Bedlington
Saturday 2nd January <i>St Basil the Great / St Gregory Nazianzen</i>	10.00am Mass: Ken Wilson	5.00pm Confessions 5.30pm Vigil: Bridgie & Jim Kiernan
Sunday 3rd January 2nd Sunday after Christmas	9.00am Mass: People of the Parish 11.00am Mass: Jim McKee 12.00pm Baptism: Jessica Ridley	
Monday 4th January <i>Weekday before Epiphany</i>		10.00am Mass: Owen McDonnell & Katie Kerrigan
Tuesday 5th January <i>Weekday before Epiphany</i>	12.00pm Mass: Monica Taylor	
Wednesday 6th January The Epiphany of the Lord	12.00pm Mass: Pat Joyce	10.00am Mass: McDonnell & Ruddy Families
Thursday 7th January <i>Weekday after Epiphany</i>	NO MASS TODAY	
Friday 8th January <i>Weekday after Epiphany</i>		10.30am Requiem Mass: John Mills <i>[Private Funeral for Family and those invited to attend]</i>
Saturday 9th January <i>Weekday after Epiphany</i>	10.00am Mass: Ken Wilson (JR) 10.45am Confessions	5.00pm - 5.20pm Confessions 5.30pm Vigil: Charlie Monaghan
Sunday 10th January The Baptism of the Lord	9.00am Mass: Jim McKee 11.00am Mass: People of the Parish	



The Holy Father Pope Francis' Intentions for January 2021

Human Fraternity: May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.



Ask your MP to oppose introducing assisted suicide

The assisted suicide lobby have launched a large campaign to put pressure on the Government to reconsider the legalisation of assisted suicide. It is vital that it is clear to the Government that the public want them to continue to hold strong against this pressure from assisted suicide campaigners and reject their demands. Right To Life UK have set up an easy to use tool which will enable you to email your MP asking them to make it clear to the Government that it should not give into demands from the assisted suicide lobby to reconsider the legalisation of assisted suicide. It only takes 30 seconds to email your MP by visiting the link below: <https://righttolife.org.uk/StopAssistedSuicide>

Help protect babies with cleft lip, cleft palate and club foot

Sadly abortion is currently available in the UK, right up to birth, for babies with cleft lip, cleft palate and club foot. All of these conditions can be corrected. A cross-party group of MPs from the three largest parties in the UK Parliament have come together to bring forward the Abortion (Cleft lip, cleft palate and club foot) Bill. The Bill will change the law to clarify that cleft palate, cleft lip, and club foot are not grounds for abortion in the UK. Can you help with getting your MP to support the Bill? Please visit www.standupandsmile.org.uk to email your MP asking them to support the Bill. It only takes 30 seconds. This Bill will be discussed again at the beginning of March 2021 in Parliament.



Diocesan Refugee Project

The Refugee Project which has just been making financial donations to refugees since March, is finally re-opening. It will now be sited at the SVP headquarters at Blackfriars, Newcastle. Donations of food would be gratefully accepted, as well as toiletries. There have been some changes in the food requested. Please donate **tinned fish, tinned tomatoes, sugar, rice, biscuits, tinned chickpeas. Please DO NOT donate tins of meat or baked beans.** As we are unable to store goods in Church at the moment, we have a temporary measure ... delivering the food to the home of Donald Marr, who is the parish representative for the project. Donald's address is 3 Cottingvale in Morpeth (*at the top of Cottingwood Lane*). If you are able to make donations of any of the above items, please phone Donald on ' 01670 505573, before delivery, to arrange a time to drop off items. Thankyou.

Supporting Asylum Seekers in our local community

Asylum Seekers in the Ashington area are supported through the charity 'Northumberland County of Sanctuary'. At this time of year they particularly need shoes for the children but cannot afford to buy them. County of Sanctuary tries to help people in as many ways as possible - be it language learning, bikes to be able to get around cheaply and children's shoes so that they are able to go to school and access good education. Donations can be made to their bank account: Account Name "Northumberland County of Sanctuary", Account No. 77748368, Sort Code: 30-65-22. Their Charity No is 1185663hb. Alternatively cheques can be sent to the treasurer: Peter Edge, 2 Hobberlaw Farm Cottages, Rugley Rd, Alnwick, NE66 2AQ. Please Contact Maura (☎ 01670 516452) or Gerry (☎ 01670 517829) for more information. Thank you for any support you can give.

