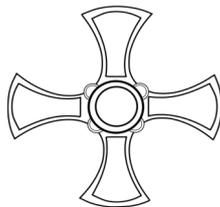


**Saint Bede's
Catholic Church**
Catholic Row
BEDLINGTON
NE22 6HS



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

Parishes of the St Benet Biscop 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 27th March 2022 - Fourth Sunday of Lent (C)



The story of the Prodigal Son must be one of the best known of Jesus's parables. The boy goes off and squanders his inheritance, then returns home to a welcoming father, a jealous elder brother and a celebration. Traditionally we have focused all the attention on the son. And particularly in Lent it seems obvious to concentrate on the boy who has acted stupidly and now wants to come back to where he knows he belongs.

The younger son is just like us. He doesn't know how well off he is and he is attracted by things that offer pleasure and happiness but just lead to grief. Returning home is about our Lenten penances and our decision to follow Christ more closely and turn from our sin. The reason the son could return home was that he knew what sort of father he had. The possibility of forgiveness had rubbed off from father to son.

But what if the story were called the parable of the Prodigal Father? Would it still work? It certainly would, because the father is absolutely wasteful with his love. He doesn't even let the boy finish his prepared speech asking for forgiveness. He simply embraces him, gets him cleaned up with new clothes and starts a big feast. He is so pleased to have the boy back that no expense is spared...and that's despite what the boy has done. By our standards the father goes over the top in his lavish generosity. Just like God.

Similarly with the older brother. If we focus on him we see a very sad character. He cannot see beyond his own efforts, the work he has put in on the farm. All this forgiveness and generosity of the father sticks in the elder brother's throat. He is like any one of us who refuses to forgive others. Of course, anyone who cannot forgive will be an outsider at the party.

They say that the family is where you can return when no one else will have you! Jesus's parable bears this out. It's about forgiveness and feasting, about Eucharist and celebration, about returning to the Christian community where no one can withhold forgiveness because we all know what it is like to have been lost and found again.





At this time of the Church's year, we are asked to pray for Peace on Earth; Openness to the Word of God; Christian Unity; The Sick and those who Care for them; Victims of Trafficking and Those who work to comfort them; The Unemployed: Please pray for those we know who are unwell, as well as the many who have no one to pray for them; for those in hospital; for many people who have COVID-19 at the moment; for all who have died recently; and for all whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Lenten Alms Collection

There will be a Special Retiring Collection at Masses next weekend [2nd/3rd April] for Lenten Alms, for the work of St Cuthbert's Care in the diocese.



Holy Places Collection

On Palm Sunday [9th/10th April] there will be a Special Retiring Collection for the Holy Places, the special places in the Holy Land associated with the life of Jesus.

Change of Mass Time on Thursday

Mass on Thursday 31st March will be celebrated at 9.15am, to allow Father Peter to drive to Ushaw for a meeting which begins at 11am.

Your Gift Aid Status

Has your status for Gift Aid changed in the last year? Have you told us? Are you no longer paying tax? We need to know. We do not know your status, if you do not tell us. Please contact us to tell us, otherwise we might be claiming for something we are not able to do! Please contact us at the Parish Office. Likewise if you feel you would like to join the gift Aid scheme if you are a UK taxpayer, let us know and we will let you have the correct paperwork.



Heritage Open Day Support

Heritage Open Days will be held in September, for us it will probably 17th / 18th September. This may seem a long way away. But if St Robert's Church and Presbytery is to be involved in this, we need to know we have enough help to do this, with people prepared to help erect displays in Church and the Presbytery and others willing to be available on the day to welcome visitors in the Church and in Collingwood House. If you think you could be available in preparation and on the day please let us know by contacting Fr Peter or Bernadette in the Parish Office where we will keep a list of who is offering help.



we have enough help to do this, with people prepared to help erect displays in Church and the Presbytery and others willing to be available on the day to welcome visitors in the Church and in Collingwood House. If you think you could be available in preparation and on the day please let us know by contacting Fr Peter or Bernadette in the Parish Office where we will keep a list of who is offering help.

Stations of the Cross

We celebrate and pray the Stations of the Cross this week after Mass on Tuesday and Thursday at St Robert's Church, Morpeth.

Altar Servers Needed



If any young people are willing to become Altar Servers at either St Bede's or St Robert's Churches, please contact Fr Peter as soon as possible.

Newsletter by Email

We are now printing more newsletters as more people come back to Mass, but you could help us offset our carbon footprint by receiving the Newsletter by email. You will receive the e-version newsletter on a Friday evening rather than waiting for the paper copy at Sunday Mass. Email us with your details.

Parish Secretaries

On 14th April, Mrs Bernadette Rich will retire as Parish Secretary at St Robert of Newminster Parish. Bernadette has become a great asset to our parish during recent years and we take this opportunity to thank her for all she has done for us as Parish Secretary at St Robert's. She will certainly be a miss around the Presbytery, but I'm sure we will continue to see her in the Parish and at Mass. We wish Bernadette well in her retirement when it comes around. Bernadette's place as Parish Secretary will be taken by Mary Carter, who is also the Parish Secretary at St Bede's Parish in Bedlington. The two roles will be combined and Mary will continue at St Bede's, as well as taking on her new role at St Robert's. Office times will obviously change but we look forward to welcoming Mary into her new role at St Robert's and hopefully everyone will get the opportunity to say hello and make her welcome at St Robert's.

Note to Extraordinary Ministers

Extraordinary Ministers taking Holy Communion out to Sick and Housebound are reminded that you should use the hand gel before putting the host into your pyx and, if possible, to have your own bottle of gel with you, so that you can use this before giving Holy Communion to those you are visiting.

COVID Guidelines and Coming to Mass

We have received the revised guidelines from the Bishops of England and Wales. These guidelines can be read fully at cbcew.org.uk The main things for us are ...

- Hand sanitiser should be available for all to use at places of entry and exit to our churches.
- The necessity for social distancing is removed so churches should operate up to their normal capacity figures.
- Those who wish to wear a face covering may do so during the celebration of Mass.
- Singing can occur and there is a general encouragement to wear face coverings while singing. However, it is recognised that not everyone will feel able to do this.
- The use of hymn books and other worship aids are permitted as part of the liturgy. Servers and their various ministries (acolyte, book-bearer, incense) are to be encouraged to return.
- The vessels containing the altar breads for consecration at Mass should remain covered until the moment of distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful.
- Holy Communion is to be distributed under one kind only (i.e. the Sacred Host). At concelebrations involving a number of priests, communion for them should be by intinction of the Sacred Host in the Precious Blood.
- Those who distribute Holy Communion should wear a face covering and sanitise their hands before doing so.
- Contact tracing ended on 24th February and so there is no need for track and trace QR codes or other means (e.g. Mass booking systems) in our churches from now on.

Whilst the circulation of the virus continues in society, the clear direction of the UK Government is that after two years of restrictions and following the successful roll-out of the vaccination programme, the usual patterns of life should return. This is true for the life of the Church in England in Wales in all of its activities. Whilst recognising this principle, there should be vigilance at the local level in terms of viral infection and transmission and local adaptations should be put in place.

Return to Church for all

Bishop Robert has written to all the priests with this message ...
"Please do all you can to encourage your parishioners to return to church. As Cardinal Vincent has done in the Westminster Diocese, I would ask all those who have returned to church, to encourage those who have not yet done so to join them at Mass. As the usual patterns of life return, it is important that we keep a healthy balance in our own guidelines to parishioners. At present there still seems to be a number of parishes in our Diocese, where many restrictions from an earlier time in the pandemic are still in place. Live streaming has been a benefit for everyone and remains so for those unable to come to church. It is not, however, an alternative to a full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy. It is important that this should be communicated to parishioners". So we encourage everyone to make a concerted effort to return back to Mass, to full and active participation at Sunday Mass and to physically receiving Holy Communion. If you know someone not yet back with us, please, as Bishop Robert says, encourage them that now is the time to come back. *[if you have a long-term illness or disability or you are classed as vulnerable then we understand if you are unable to join us.]*

If you have COVID or symptoms of it

You are invited back to Mass but obviously you have to have common sense about the spread of the virus. If you have tested positive for the coronavirus, or someone very close to you has, you should not attend church until your period of isolation has ended and you have two negative lateral flow tests. In this way we can continue to keep church a safe place for all those who do attend.

Covid Stewards

As the new guidelines from the Bishops' Conference ease the restrictions in our churches, it is no longer necessary for us to continue the role of a Steward and this will end this weekend. I extend a very particular word of thanks to all our stewards for their assistance, their welcoming and their cleaning of our churches during the difficult days of the pandemic. I am extremely grateful to all who have acted as stewards so that our churches remained a safe place for all who were using them during the covid pandemic

Appeal for Welcomers

We want to have a team of people who will act as welcomers in our churches, just as we had in the time before the pandemic hit us. If you can help with this, in welcoming people to our church, it would be greatly appreciated.

Offertory Procession

As restrictions in our Church are eased, because of the above guidelines, we will resume our Offertory Processions at Sunday Masses next week.

Confessions

If you have been away from Church throughout the pandemic, you may feel the need to go to Confession before receiving Holy Communion once again. Please remember that we have Confessions on a Saturday morning at St Robert's Church and a Saturday evening at St Bede's Church. You can also ask anytime if you need to go to Confession.

Children's Liturgy Group



Our Children's Liturgy Groups have started at both the Vigil Mass at St Bede's Church and the 9am Mass at St Roberts Church. We are very grateful to our Catechists and helpers who are leading this. We encourage all Children at school, up to Yr5 to join the Children's Liturgy Group. Children older than that should remain in Church for Mass.

Confirmation Programme

The Confirmation Programme has its last meeting on Monday at 6.30pm at St Bede's and on Friday 1st April 2022, at 7pm, Bishop Robert Byrne will celebrate the Confirmation Mass at St Bede's Church. Please keep these young people in your prayers

Preparing for Baptism

The next Baptism Preparation Meeting will be held in May at St Bede's Church. Parents requesting Baptism for a child are asked to contact us to make arrangements to attend this Meeting. **PLEASE NOTE:** Please telephone the office to speak about Baptisms, please do not send in an email. **Better still speak to Fr Peter or Deacon Stephen when you come to Mass.** Parents are asked to meet with Fr Peter (or Deacon Stephen if for St Bede's Church) to fill in the paperwork and then after the Baptism Preparation to meet once again to set a date for the Baptism. **Please note that one parent must be a baptised catholic for Baptism in the Catholic Church and it is also hoped that the catholic parent or even the whole family has been to Mass recently**, especially as at the Baptism the parents will be promising to bring their child up "in the practice of the faith". According to Canon Law, Godparents should be Catholic. Those who are Christians of other denominations can be Witnesses. Those who are not Baptised, and those who declare as having no faith, agnostic or atheist cannot stand as Godparents.



Using our Halls

We have Church Halls at both St Bede's and St Robert's which are available for parish use throughout the day. Other denominations in Bedlington and Morpeth seem to have thriving activities throughout the day during the week, while our Halls stand empty not being used. If anyone wants to consider events for the parish - Coffee Mornings, activities and events, craft groups, book clubs, discussion groups, scripture or prayer groups - with somebody who is prepared and committed to leading these events, please speak to Father Peter. Outside Groups / Non-Parish Groups can also book the Hall at the usual rates. If interested please speak to either Bernadette or Mary in our Parish Offices, or to Father Peter.

New Parishioner and Updated Information

Are you new to the Parish? Have you completed the "Keeping in Touch" form with your details? Are you a regular parishioner who has moved house and need to update your details? Please complete one of the forms available at Church and send back to us. If you want this form emailed to you, please let us know and then you can complete it on your own computer and email it back to us.

Rosary Chain for Peace

Could you join the Rosary Chain by saying one decade of the Rosary each day during Lent and offer it for Peace in the World? There are still several "mysteries" that have not been signed for. To take part all you have to do is sign your name on the form at the back of Church, and say that Decade of the rosary each day. If everyone on the list does this then we will eventually have a complete Rosary (the Four Mysteries) said every day.



Programming and Playing of Electronic Hymnal

We are still looking for someone, or perhaps a couple of people at St Bede's Church, to take on the responsibility for the programming of hymns and playing them via our electronic HymnalPlus^{UK} hymnal at our Saturday evening Masses. Singing with accompaniment makes it much easier! If you can help and are willing to do this, please let Fr Peter know.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

The Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is still planning to travel in October, and there are places still available. If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact Gill at Tangney Tours on ☎ 01732 886666 for further information or for booking forms

Ukraine Appeal

There are many organisations raising funds to support the people of Ukraine but some Catholic Charities doing this are ...

- cafod.org.uk ... and click on the DEC Appeal for Ukraine.
- acnuk.org and click on their link for the Ukraine Appeal
- <https://www.caritas.org/ukraine-appeal-22/> has a donate button and explains what they have done in Ukraine since the 2014 Russian invasion into Eastern Ukraine. Caritas Ukraine has helped nearly 826, 500 people affected by the humanitarian crisis. Its work is crucial especially for the most vulnerable people, such as the elderly and children.
- The Jesuit Refugee Service also has a donate button on their website ... jrseurope.org/en/news/ukraine-jrs-in-action-to-welcome-refugees/ and explains what they do to support refugees from Ukraine

A prayer for Ukraine

Loving God, we pray for the people of Ukraine, for all those suffering or afraid, that you will be close to them and protect them. We pray for world leaders, for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices. We pray for the world that in this moment of crisis, we may reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters in need. May we walk in your ways so that peace and justice become a reality for the people of Ukraine and for all the world. Amen



CAFOD Fast Day



Please return any CAFOD Fast Day Envelopes or contributions this week please so that we can send off our donations.

Teas and Coffees

Teas and Coffees are now available after the Vigil Mass at St Bede's Church and also after the 9am Mass at St Robert's. All Welcome.

School Chaplaincy Vacancies

There are currently two vacancies for the appointment of school chaplains at St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Washington and St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Lanchester. The closing date for both vacancies is Wednesday 6th April 2022. Please visit the Diocesan Education Vacancies page at <https://diocesehn.org.uk/education/job-vacancies#EduDHN>

Synod 2021 -2023

'Catholic Women Speak', an international forum for dialogue and awareness-raising around issues to do with women in the Catholic Church, invites Catholic women to take part in a survey that will form part of a submission to the Synodal process. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and is available in six languages, with further information available here: <https://catholicwomenspeak.com/catholic-women-international-synod-survey>



Livestreaming Mass from St Robert of Newminster Church

Masses at St Robert of Newminster Church can now be viewed on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/StRobert> Masses are streamed live at 9am on Sunday, 10am on Tuesday and 10am Thursday, or available as a recording on the above Parish YOUTUBE site anytime. Are you able to assist with the tablet control and laptop for the Livestream of Masses. **If you are able to help at the 9am Mass on a Sunday or at the 10am Mass on a Tuesday or Thursday, please let Fr Peter know as soon as possible.**

The Wednesday Word

"Wednesday Word" Reflections on the Sunday readings, for both adults and children can be accessed at wednesdayword.org It is a wonderful resource for both parishes and for Schools to help focus on the forthcoming Sunday readings. Paper copies of The Wednesday Word are also available from St Robert's Church

Inner Healing Course

The Diocesan Faith and Mission Department will be providing training in this ministry, initially to help you discern how God may be directing you. A residential training course will take place at Minsteracres Retreat Centre and will run across 2 sessions: Session 1: 22nd - 23rd April 2022; Session 2: 15th - 16th July 2022. The cost of the course is £180.00 per person. For more information look for the poster on your parish notice board, or contact the Vicariate for Faith & Mission admin team who can provide further details and application forms. adminfaith.mission@diocesehn.org.uk

Masses and Intentions this week

	St Robert of Newminster Church Morpeth	St Bede's Church Bedlington
Saturday 26th March Weekday	9.40am The Rosary 10am Service of Word and Communion	5.00pm - 5.20pm: Confessions 5.30pm Vigil Mass: Elizabeth Charlton & Wilf Bateman
Sunday 27th March 4th Sunday of Lent	9am Mass: Sylvia Thompson 11am Mass: People of the Parish	
Monday 28th March Weekday of Lent		10am Mass: Northern Brethren Fund: Mary Finley
Tuesday 29th March Weekday of Lent	9.25am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Mass: Ken & Eileen Percival <i>(followed by Stations of the Cross)</i>	9.25am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Service of Word and Communion
Wednesday 30th March Weekday of Lent	9.25am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Service of Word and Communion	10am Mass: Northern Brethren Fund: Fr Harry Ryan
Thursday 31st March Weekday of Lent	9.15am Mass: George Beattie & Thomas Foster Beattie <i>(followed by Stations of the Cross)</i>	9.25am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Service of Word and Communion
Friday 1st April Weekday of Lent	9.25am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Service of Word and Communion	7.00pm Mass: with conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation
Saturday 2nd April Weekday of Lent	9.40am Rosary 10am Mass: Barbara Rice (AS) 10.30am—11am Adoration and Confessions	5.00pm Confessions 5.30pm Vigil Mass: Sirio Nardini
Sunday 3rd April 5th Sunday of Lent	9am Mass: People of the Parish 11am Mass: Alan Smith (K&BB) 12.30pm Baptism: Ruben Lawley	



The Holy Father Pope Francis' Intentions for March 2022

A Christian Response to Bioethical Challenges: We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.



Food Donations



The Diocesan Justice and Peace Group need donations to support refugees and asylum seekers. If you can help with any of the following items, please leave in the box in the Church porch. **Tinned Tomatoes; Chickpeas; Tinned Fish (e.g. tuna); Biscuits, Rice, Sugar, Toilet Roll, Shampoo, Shower Gel, Soap, Deodorant, Toothpaste, and Toothbrushes.**

Wansbeck Food Bank and Matthew Project Donations

We now have an extra box [with a red lid] at the back of St Robert's Church for the Wansbeck Valley Foodbank [financial donations can also be made online] and the food bin for the Matthew Project is at the back of St Bede's Church. Donations of all non-perishable food items are welcome to be placed into the bins for those less fortunate than ourselves.

The Diocesan Year of the Eucharist

There are several aims of the Year of the Eucharist ...

- To celebrate the Eucharist at the heart of the life and mission of the Church and to gather people back.
- To grow as a Diocese in our love and appreciation of the Eucharist.
- To deepen our appreciation of the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist through the rites.
- To revitalise and renew our faith through a deepening prayer and devotion of the Eucharist.
- To go out and serve the world through the nourishment of the Eucharist.

Each one of us has the opportunity to achieve these aims in our daily lives. During this Year of the Eucharist can you make the extra effort to attend daily Mass? Can you travel to Morpeth or to Bedlington to get in an extra Mass? Or come back to Sunday Mass and celebrate the Eucharist with your parish community. Come to Saturday morning Mass and stay on for half an hour of quiet prayer. Come to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament before Mass for some quiet prayer

Christian Aid Coffee Morning / Toy Sale

The Morpeth Christian Aid Group are holding a coffee morning and selling tray-bakes and (second hand) toys on Holy Saturday 15th April at St James Church, Morpeth, outside if the weather is fine enough. We would appreciate any donations of toys for sale at this event.

Christian Aid Week - 15th - 21st May, Morpeth

"As usual, Christian Aid Week starts with an ecumenical service, this year at 4pm on Sunday 15th May in the Methodist Church, Morpeth. Please join us to pray for all those in need throughout the World, and for the success of Christian Aid Week to provide the resources to give them the help they need. As last year, we will be using "delivery-only" envelopes for the house-to-house collection, in Morpeth i.e. we only need people to deliver them and to act as a "postbox" for those who choose to respond to return their envelopes. We will not be going round to knock on doors to collect the envelopes. Because of this, we need the "post box" addresses to be in or very close to the street they are delivered to, so we need lots of people to volunteer for this. If you can also deliver the envelopes for your street that is great. Alternatively, can you volunteer to deliver envelopes, which could be anywhere in the town, for someone else to be the "post box"? Please sign up on the list if you can do either delivery and / or be a post box."

