

ST. JOHN'S
HAYDON BRIDGE

ST. MARY'S
HEXHAM

ST. OSWALD'S
BELLINGHAM



SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SUNDAY 25TH JULY 2021 | SUNDAY CYCLE: B | WEEKDAYS: I
LITURGY OF THE HOURS: WEEK I

CLERGY

Fr Christopher Warren
Fr James Dunne
Rev. Deacon Martin Bell

PARISH OFFICE

01434 603119
Mon-Thurs. 9:00 - 13:00

CONTACT

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Saturday (Vigil)	24th July	17:30	Public * Hexham	The Repose of the Soul of Robert Wallace
Sunday	25th July	09:00	Public * Haydon Bridge	People of Our Parishes
Sunday	25th July	10:30	Public * Live-Streamed Hexham	Peter Michael Handley & Judith Handley
Sunday	25th July	11:00	Public * Bellingham	Peter Zinovieff
Monday	26th July	09:30	Public Live-Streamed Hexham	Deceased Members of the Cresswell Family
Tuesday	27th July	09:30	Public * Swinburne	Deceased Members of the Purcell Family
Wednesday	28th July	09:30	Public * Bellingham	No Mass Today
Wednesday	28th July	09:30	Public Live-Streamed Hexham	Kay Andrews
Thursday	29th July	09:30	Public * Haltwhistle	The Holy Souls
Friday	30th July	Noon	Public * Otterburn	No Mass Today
Saturday (Vigil)	31st July	17:30	Public * Hexham	Deceased Members of the S.V.P.
Sunday	1st Aug	09:00	Public * Haydon Bridge	David Barnes
Sunday	1st Aug	10:30	Public * Live-Streamed Hexham	Graham Sinclair
Sunday	1st Aug	11:00	Public * Bellingham	Holy Souls

* Places at these Masses should be booked in advance

Mass bookings open at 11:00 am each Tuesday. Places are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. To book a place at one of these Masses, please visit www.heavenfieldpartnership.org.uk or www.stmaryshexham.org.uk Then click on the "Book a Mass" button which is in the centre of the homepage and follow the simple links to the relevant church. Alternatively, you can book a place at Mass by telephoning the Parish Office on 01434 603119.

PLEASE KEEP CHECKING THE WEBSITE (www.stmaryshexham.org.uk) FOR FURTHER UPDATES AND ADDITIONS TO THIS SCHEDULE

MASS AT MINSTERACRES

Sunday Mass is celebrated at Minsteracres at 08:30 and at 10:30, whilst Daily Mass is celebrated at 08:30.
Please book in advance.

MASS TODAY

First Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44

Responsorial Psalm: 144 (145): 10-11, 15-18

Response is:

You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Your words are spirit. Lord, and they are life; you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 6:1-15

THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP INTENTION is for Pope Francis

REFLECTION

Jesus satisfies human needs. The story tells us that the crowds followed Jesus because they saw the signs he did on those who were diseased. After witnessing another sign they will recognise him as a prophet. The recognition on the part of the crowds is based on Jesus satisfying human needs.

We can be reminded of family life and dealing with children. Often as long as all needs (and wants) are met things can seem to be going along well. The children are satisfied. We will see later in this same chapter of John that Jesus asks something of the crowds and most abandon him. It is easy to follow Jesus when we are on the receiving end of bounty and goodness. It is easy for children to be happy when they are on the receiving end of parents' bounty and goodness. But what happens when the crowds are asked to make a commitment? What happens when family members are asked to step up and take some responsibility?

Growing into adult discipleship means that there will come a time (if it hasn't come already) when we will no longer be simply on the receiving end of the relationship. We will be called to enter further into a relationship with Jesus that is more mutually reciprocal, though Jesus will always be the teacher and we will always be in the position of disciples. Jesus will call the crowds closer to the circle with him. It is easy to be a follower, or a member of the crowd receiving goodies. Soon, those crowds will be invited to go deeper.

LIVE STREAMED MASSES

There is a continuing cost to providing our live streamed Masses. If you would like to make a contribution to making possible this service for everyone, please let the Parish Office know
(admin@stmaryshexham.org.uk).

TODAY WE WELCOME ...

BABY POPPY ISABELLA ANNE ROBERTSON and her parents Lee and Bernadette.

Poppy will be Baptised at Saint Mary's after the Sunday Morning Mass.

Fr. Christopher asks that our communities help Poppy's parents in their duty as Christian parents by praying for them and supporting them in our parishes.

Poppy, the Christian community welcomes you with great joy.

IMPORTANT MEETING WITH OUR M.P.

We have arranged a meeting with our MP, Guy Opperman, on **Saturday 7th August** to discuss the value of life, in particular as it applies to life at its beginning and end, as Parliament starts to discuss a bill which would make assisting a suicide legal. We would like participation in this from as many people across the Partnership as possible, but we will have a limited amount of spaces available for the meeting, so booking in advance is necessary.

If you would like to attend this meeting, please let the Parish Office know as soon as possible.

COVID RESTRICTIONS: AN UPDATE

As you will be aware, H. M. Government have taken the decision to lift all of the restrictions in England which have been in place for the past 18 months due to the global pandemic.

Up to the time of release of this newsletter, we are still awaiting definitive direction from the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales as to what, if any, restrictions will remain in place within our churches.

In the short term and in the absence of any such direction from the Bishops, Fr. Christopher has decided that, from 19th July and until further notice, the following measures will be adhered to: -

- The capacities of our churches will stay the same.
- Booking in advance will be required for all Sunday Masses.
- Due to the limited capacity of Saint Mary's (Swinburne), Saint Peter's, Saint Oswald's and Saint Wilfrid's, booking in advance will be required for all weekday Masses.
- Booking in advance will **not** be required for weekday Masses at Saint Mary's (Hexham).
- The wearing of face masks/coverings is preferred.
- Congregational singing - we hope to be able to update you about this very soon.

In the light of the very high levels of infection currently within the North East, we still have a duty to protect our clergy, ourselves and each other from Covid-19.

Your patience and understanding with these matters are greatly appreciated.

Many thanks.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED

- **ALAN CAIRNS**, of Oakwood, who died on 14th July. Alan's Funeral Service will take place at Saint Mary's on Tuesday 28th July.

Please pray for the Repose of the Soul of Alan, as well as his wife Phil, his family and close friends.

Requiesce in Pace

Please note - current regulations mean that there is a limit to the number of people allowed to attend each Requiem Mass or Funeral Service. These people will be invited by the respective families, which means that these Services are not currently open to the public. If you would like to attend a Requiem Mass or Funeral Service, please contact the relevant Funeral Director, or the family of the deceased.

THE JOURNEY TO ROME

On **Wednesday 8th September** we will begin a whole new course, weekly via zoom. The course will be called '**The Journey to Rome**' and will be based on The Acts of The Apostles.

It is rare that The Acts of the Apostles is studied - despite being fascinating in many different ways.

This time of learning and sharing together is open to all parishioners from our churches, with each session being led by Chris Keating.

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact the Parish Office (01434 603119 or admin@stmaryshexham.org.uk) as soon as possible.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to Fr. Chris for celebrating Graham's Funeral Mass and his kindness in helping with the preparation; to Judith for the Order of Service and helpfulness in general; to Paul & the Choir for the lovely music; to Aidan & Liz who volunteered as Stewards and to all the congregation who supported us at Graham's Funeral Mass. Thanks also for the lovely messages of condolence in the cards and letters we received. They are really comforting to me and the whole family. I feel privileged to belong to such a loving and caring community.

Bernadette Sinclair

THIS WEEK'S HOMILY FROM FATHER JIM

The 17th Sunday of Year B: God feeds his people.

1st Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44: The Prophet Elisha feeds many people;

2nd Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6: Tolerance leads to unity, based on faith;

Gospel: John 6:1-15: The Feeding of the 5,000.

For the next five weeks, we leave Mark's Gospel, in favour of St John's. All four gospels give the Feeding of the 5,000, but only St John offers the long account of Jesus' teaching based on it – and how most of his disciples reacted to that teaching. In John's gospel, the feeding is one of the seven “signs” given by Jesus – starting with the Marriage Feast of Cana, and ending with the Raising of Lazarus. They are not simple miracles, but strange or wonderful acts that show a deeper truth about Jesus' power, and what he does for us in faith. In that sense, they are a bit like our RC idea of the sacraments: physical, outwardly- visible acts that convey the presence of God, who helps us spiritually in ways symbolized by those outward acts. (For example, the ‘water’ aspect of Baptism represents cleansing from sin and the fresh life offered by God.) However, the ‘signs’ also challenge us to think more deeply about what Jesus means to us.

The first reading deals with people being fed in a time of famine. In a country of hot, dry summers, it was an ever-present threat. The reason the Hebrews went to Egypt in the first place (about 1700 BC) was to get food; Canaan, their promised “Holy Land”, was suffering famine. One of their number – Joseph, originally sold by his brothers as a slave – had risen through the ranks to be head of the Egyptian civil service, and had power to distribute grain to others. Once there, the Hebrews were stuck, then enslaved for about 400 years. Only under Moses' leadership, with God's help, did they escape in the “Exodus” - about 1250 BC. But, once in the Promised Land, they found that famines were still a regular curse. In the first reading, the prophet Elisha helps to feed people in the northern kingdom of Israel, about 850 BC - 400 years after the Exodus from Egypt. It's only in the last 70 years, with modern irrigation, that the threat of drought and famine has disappeared from that whole area.

We now come to the gospel. The feeding of the 5,000 is so familiar that it needs no re-hash here, but it's worth asking how the situation arose. You may remember that last week, St Mark told us that Jesus, looking for peace & quiet, came ashore to find a large crowd needing him – “like sheep without a shepherd”. This was the group whom he ended up feeding. St John also mentions the crowd walking round the top of the Sea of Galilee – but their motivation was less desperate than St Mark had implied: here, they were on the lookout for more “miracles” or “signs”. They weren't going to be disappointed! Also, St John mentions that it was “shortly before the Jewish Feast of Passover” – spring-time. Mark 6:38 supports this: he mentions people “sitting down on the green grass”. But the reference to the Passover Meal also implies the link with the unleavened bread used in it – a link with which we are familiar at Mass.

I have to state bluntly that there is no logical explanation for what happened next: the feeding of this crowd (from the 5 barley-loaves and two fish offered by a small boy) cannot be explained away: as with other nature-miracles, you either believe it or you don't. Some commentators explain it by saying Jesus' moral teaching about love persuaded others to share their food among everyone. I'm sorry, but I think this is phoney: it doesn't explain the end of this story, where St John tells us that the people, “seeing this sign he had given said: ‘This really is the prophet who is to come into the world’.” The upshot was that Jesus saw they were going to make him their (messianic) king by force, and so had to flee into the hills by himself. This chaotic ending only makes sense if the people had witnessed something un-natural.

As I said earlier, this reading is the first of five from John chapter 6; the later ones deal with Jesus' teaching on what the feeding of the 5,000 meant – especially with reference to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. But even this week, we can get a couple ideas about this sacrament. First, like the feeding of the 5,000, it is a social event: people come together; even the poor are included – at no cost to themselves. A second feature is that it is a religious experience – there should be a sense of “awe” and “mystery” at the presence of God. (This depends a lot on how the celebrant and congregation behave.) Also, the run of words is meant to remind us of the liturgy of the Eucharist: Jesus took the bread / he gave thanks over it / he gave it to the people. Think of the Mass words before the Consecration, and you'll see what I mean.

It's a pity that we cannot return to the pre-pandemic use of our parishes' church and social facilities – at least for the moment. The Bishop is worried about the huge rise in Covid cases, especially among younger people in the built-up parts of the region. I've always felt that we can't separate the religious from the social in our faith – the two complement each other. This weekend's gospel shows that this is what happened at the feeding of the 5,000, and the sooner we can resume fully both the ‘churchy’ and the social sides in our worship, the better.

Fr Jim Dunne.

MASS INTENTIONS

Would you like to have Holy Mass celebrated for a particular person or Intention?

If your answer is yes, then please forward the details to Saint Mary's Parish Office (admin@stmaryshexham.org.uk or 01434 603119). If you would like this Mass to be celebrated on a particular date, then you should give us as much notice as possible. Dates are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Unless a particular date has been requested, Masses are celebrated in the order in which they are requested, so yours may not be celebrated immediately.

It is traditional to make a monetary Offering when you request a Mass. The amount given is up to you, but should be according to your means. Details of how to make your Offering can be obtained from the Parish Office.

Many thanks.

SANCTUARY LAMP INTENTIONS

The Sanctuary lamps at Saint Mary's burn constantly. Each week, the lamp is lit for a different Intention. If you would like your intentions to be remembered in this way, a monetary Offering should accompany each Intention. The amount given is up to you, but should be whatever you can afford.

For more information about this novel way to remember your loved ones and other Intentions, please contact the Parish Office (admin@stmaryshexham.org.uk or 01434 603119).

GARDEN FETE

Carntyne Care Home (adjacent to Saint Mary's) in Hexham will host their **Annual Garden Fete** between **10:00am and 2:00pm on Saturday 31st July**.

There will be lots of stalls and entertainment, including tombola, children's games, craft stalls and much more. Why not come along and have some fun.

All proceeds will go towards the Residents' Fund.

CONFESSIONS

The times for Private Confession at Saint Mary's, with Fr. Christopher or Fr. Jim, are advertised in the Parishes' Newsletter each week.



Currently, Confessions are being heard in the Parish Centre.

Please wait in the Narthex area until the priest is free

Times for Confession this week: -

- **Saturday** - between 16:30 and 17:10

Please Remember: -

- Social distancing should be observed at all times.

SAINTS DAYS AND FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

- Monday 26th July - **Saints Joachim & Anne**
- Thursday 29th July - **Saint Martha**
- Friday 30th July - **Saint Peter Chrysologus**
- Saturday 31st July - **Saint Ignatius of Loyola**

ONGOING FAITH WITNESS AGAINST HASSOCKFIELD

In October, the Home Office plans to open an Immigration Removal Centre at Hassockfield on the site of the former Medomsley Detention Centre. This will be for 80 women seeking asylum in the UK. The proposal is inhumane, unjust and incompatible with our faith which calls us to recognise the intrinsic dignity of each person. These women are people like ourselves who have the right to a place of safety and to be treated with respect and compassion.

A monthly prayer vigil will be held at the barrier to Hassockfield on the first Sunday of each month at 3pm starting on Sunday 1st August. This will last for about 30 minutes and will incorporate a time of silent witness. Please support this with your prayers and, if at all possible, come along. For further information, please contact lizarchibald.justiceandpeace@gmail.com