**Times of Mass, Intentions and Services**

**Third Sunday in Advent Year B – 17th December 2023**

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|  | **English Martyrs and Ss Peter & Paul’s** | **St Joseph’s** | | **St Bede’s** | | **Feast Days**  **this week** |
| **Sat**  **16th** | **6:00pm**  **Sunday Vigil Mass**  Noel Bartholomew Rodrigues RIP (JA) | **9:30am**  Joyce Ellis RIP (MT) | | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Sun 17th** | \_\_\_\_ | **10:30am**  Joan Wilson RIP (MH) | | **9:00am**  Pro Populo  (People of the Parish) | | **3rd Sunday**  **of Advent** |
| **Mon 18th** | \_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Tue**  **19th** | \_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_ | | **9:30am**  Tom Ayre RIP (TA)  **10:00am**  Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  **2:00pm**  Parish Advent Group | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Wed 20th** | **9:30am**  Intention of Gillian W | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Thur 21st** | \_\_\_\_ | **9:30am**  Deceased Members of Hamilton & Williams Families RIP (PH)  **2:00pm – 4:00pm**  Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament | | \_\_\_\_ | | St Peter Canisius  *Priest, Doctor* |
| **Fri 22nd** | **5:00pm – 6:00pm**  Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  **6:00pm**  Margaret & Vinny James RIP (MT) | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Sat**  **23rd** | **6:00pm**  **Sunday Vigil Mass**  Ellis Family RIP (BG) | **9:30am**  Michael & Sylvia Daly RIP (VMD) | | \_\_\_\_ | | \_\_\_\_ |
| **Sun 24th** | **6:00pm**  **Christmas Eve**  **Vigil Mass**  Pro Populo  (People of the Parish) | **10:30am**  Joan McGee  (90th Birthday)  (KM) | | **9:00am**  Irene, Stan & Peter Collins RIP (DO) | | **4th Sunday**  **of Advent** |
| **Sacrament of Reconciliation** | | | | | | |
| **Thursday 21st December**  **St Joseph’s Legion Room**  **after Mass** | | | **Friday 22nd December**  **EMSSPP Confessional**  **5:00pm – 5:45pm** | | **Saturday 23rd December**  **EMSSPP Confessional**  **5:00pm – 5:45pm** | |
| **Or by Appointment – call 01642 806469** | | | | | | |

**Bulletin Items**: If you would like a notice included in the next bulletin, please email **parishnewsletterstockton@gmail.com by Tuesday evening** at the latest. Alternatively, post through the letterbox at English Martyrs and Ss Peter & Paul’s Presbytery, Redhill Road, Roseworth, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 9BY. Please remember to add your contact details in case we have a query.

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| **PARISH OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM, STOCKTON** | | | |
| St. Joseph’s | | English Martyrs and  Ss. Peter and Paul’s | St. Bede’s |
| **P A R I S H N E W S L E T T E R**  **Sunday 17th Dec 2023**  **Third Sunday of Advent** | | | |
| **Clergy** | **Parish Priest: Fr Mark Millward**  **Assistant Priest: Fr Oliver Keyes**  **Deacon: Paul Hargreaves** | | |
| **Parish**  **Office** | **Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10.00am till 2:00pm**  **Contact: Gill Hall Tel. 01642 806469**  **Email:** [**parishfamilystockton@outlook.com**](about:blank) | | |
| **Internet** | **Parish YouTube: Stockton Parish Family**  **Facebook page: @ParishFamilyStocktonRC**  **Parish website: www.parishfamilystockton.org.uk**  **Diocesan website: diocesehn.org.uk** | | |
| **Parish Contacts** | **St Vincent De Paul Society**: For anything SVP related please speak to one of our members or contact Alan on 07939 912354 or Mary on 07714 327665 or email **PresidentC211509@svp.org.uk**  **St. Joseph’s Thornton Hall**: For any requests to book / hire the Hall please contact Philip and Cath Jackson direct on 01642 284770 Thank you | | |
| **Reflection Third Sunday in Advent**  So, John the Baptist came as a witness to the light.  In today’s gospel reading he seems rather to refuse witness. He is quite negative, answering with a stalwart and repeated ‘No!’. He witnesses only that ‘There is one standing among you whom you do not know’.  It is not always easy to find Jesus. All the way through the Gospel of John there are misunderstandings about Jesus; people fail to recognise him for what he is: there’s the Samaritan at the well, Nicodemus in the night, Mary Magdalene beside the empty tomb, even Peter and the disciples as they fish on the Lake.  We can easily become so wrapped up in our own troubles and worries that we fail to recognise the one figure who can provide the solution to them, although he is standing among us, the one who ‘has the words of eternal life’. He may come to us in a way we do not like, as a corrective - blocking or diverting the way we have chosen. He may come as suffering, disappointment, failure or bereavement. All of these may be acts of God’s love, to show us the way, though we cannot see it at the time. It is just like John the Baptist, saying steadily ‘No!’, until eventually we turn around and see Christ as our true light.  How can I find Jesus in the crowded events of my busy life? He often comes in unexpected ways. Is he in the quiet voice of a friend? Is he in the anger of someone I have annoyed? Is he in the rebuke of someone who knows me better than I know myself? Is he in my failures and frustrations?  Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB, *from Wednesday Word* | | | |

Parish News

**Sick and in Need of Prayer**

Please remember in your prayers the members of our parish family who are ill.

**Recent Bereavements**: Please pray for Joan Colley and all those who have died recently. May they rest in peace. Amen.

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| PARISH FINANCES  **New Bank Account Details**: Please make cheques **payable to DHN Stockton Our Lady of Walsingham.**  If you would like to make a direct Bank transfer or set up a standing order, please contact the parish office for the new account details. Thank you.  ***Offertory envelopes:*** Please contact the parish office if you would like (or no longer need) a box of envelopes, if you have changed your address or would like to sign up for Gift Aid. |

**Red Boxes (St. Bede’s and others)**: The Mission Boxes are now due for collection. Could you please leave the boxes at the back of Church, or ring John Evans on 01642 895739 who will arrange collection.

**Would you like someone to talk to?** A trained listener is available who can offer a confidential listening service to anyone who needs a listening ear. This could include issues such as loss, anxiety, loneliness or any other matters of concern. An initial phone call can be made with the option of meeting one to one or continuing on the telephone. Please contact the parish office on 01642 806469 or email [parishfamilystockton@outlook.com](about:blank) leaving your name and contact details and a listener will get in touch. ‘Being listened to and heard is one of the greatest desires of the human heart’.

**Roseworth Big Local Advice Service** – in partnership with Citizens Advice, Roseworth Big Local has set up a new advice service to give **free specialist and independent advice** on benefits, grants, debts, finances, housing, energy costs, employment problems and much more. This can be arranged locally rather than travelling into town – call 01642 626135 to arrange an appointment. See leaflets in church for more information.

**Stockton Hope Community Larder Hardwick:** Stockton Hope would like to thank all parishioners who have kindly donated towards our Christmas hampers, and also for the food and generous monetary donations. The larder is open every Wednesday from 11am to 1pm and is available for everyone. However, we will be closed on Wednesday 27th December. We also have a ' warm space' serving tea/coffee for free or just for a chat. Everyone at the Stockton Hope Community Larder thanks you all for your wonderful generosity, God Bless and have a peaceful Christmas.

**Little Sisters of the Poor** **are fundraising for St Joseph's Home in Newcastle by collecting used postage stamps (any country or period), or foreign currency (again from any time or country). If you save your stamps from Christmas cards you receive, or have any unwanted foreign currency, please put them in the separate collection envelope at the back of church (not into the offertory baskets please) or hand in to the parish office. Thank you.**

**A Great Big Bella Canta “Thank You” to everyone who attended our concert at St Joseph’s and to those who couldn’t attend and made donations. The magnificent total of £750 was raised. If you enjoyed it you might like to put in your diary the date of our next concert,’ in aid of the Alzheimers Society. Sat 25 May 2024 7.30pm at Greens Lane Methodist Church, Hartburn**

Advent

**Parish Advent Group : 'Exploring the Nativity'** on Tuesday 19th December at 2pm in St. Bede's Church. We will finish with afternoon tea. **Please sign up on the list at the back of church** so that we can cater accordingly. Thank you.

**Our Lady and St. Bede Catholic Academy**: Our **Advent Liturgies for the Community** will be taking place on Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th December starting at 6:00pm on both evenings. All parents. carers, parishioners and members of our wider school community are warmly invited to join us for a special evening of music, drama and reflection. We would ask you to book your places using the link attached so we know how many people would like to attend. [www.ticketsource.co.uk/ourladyandstbede](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ticketsource.co.uk%2Fourladyandstbede&data=05%7C01%7C%7C057249fc54704c5af15108dbf251eb34%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638370205891158267%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zV%2FlifgixzcIzy70kn25OA%2FsFUOHwYgOLsDhiwhv1MQ%3D&reserved=0) We are asking for a small donation of £1 per ticket. All proceeds will be donated the **'Significance Fund'**, which has been set up in memory of Fr. Dermott Donnelly who worked so hard for the formation of young people in our diocese.

**Youth Ministry Conference – 3 February 2024**

This Youth Ministry and Practical Theology Conference is YMT’s first conference since the COVID-19 pandemic and we look forward to gather with youth ministers, catechists, clergy, teachers, staff and volunteer co-workers from across the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and beyond! The theme for the conference is “Investing in the Fearlessness of Youth”, inspired by a quote from Pope Francis’ letter, Christus Vivit (Chapter 7 no. 233).  We hope you can join us for this Youth Ministry Conference. Booking is now open and you can either email [nsalkeld@ymt.org](about:blank) or book online here : [www.ticketsource.co.uk/youthministryteam](about:blank).  Online booking will apply booking fees. We are looking forward to welcoming keynote speaker, Reverend Professor David Wilkinson, Director of Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science, an international project based at St John’s College, Durham, who will explore how we can engage young people in the Gospel when we live in a world of science. We are also pleased to welcome back David Wells, international speaker, best-selling author and friend of YMT, to guide us to reflect on our theme. For more information about the conference visit [www.ymt.org/ymt-conference](about:blank)

**Vacancies – Opportunities to work at the Emmaus Village**

The Emmaus Village, home for the Youth Ministry Team, hosts all the residential retreats led by YMT for our Diocesan Primary and Secondary Schools.  It also offers catering and hospitality to the biggest gathering of Catholic Schools, the YMT Summer Festivals, students named it “God Camp”.  With this we are looking for an Assistant Catering Coordinator and Kitchen Technician, who will help our catering team deliver this valuable service to all the groups that come to the Emmaus Village.  If you or someone you know, wants to be part of the YMT team, please contact [admin@ymt.org](about:blank) or click the link [www.ymt.org/vacancies](about:blank) for more information with regards to our vacancies.

Prayer and Liturgy News

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| **CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES** | | | |
| **Fourth Sunday of Advent** | 23rd | 6:00pm | EMSSPP |
|  | 24th | 9:00am | St. Bede’s |
|  | 10:30am | St. Joseph’s |
| **Christmas Eve Vigil** | 6:00pm | EMSSPP |
| **Christmas Day** | 25th | 9:00am | St. Bede’s |
|  | 9:30am | Polish Mass at EMSSPP |
|  | 10:30am | St. Joseph’s |

**Pope Francis Monthly Intentions December: For persons with disabilities:**

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

**CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal:** Donate to CAFOD’s Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at [cafod.org.uk/ipc](https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/israeli-palestinian-crisis-how-you-can-help) or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need.  Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

**Advent Reflections**- The Vicariate for Faith and Mission has produced a booklet of Advent reflections. As we prepare for Jesus’ coming at Christmas, we hope that this year’s edition will once again foster prayerful reflection on the Scriptures and a renewed sense of belonging amongst the people of the Diocese. The reflections have been written by a variety of people to express the richness of our diocesan community. The booklet is available on our own website and Facebook page and also on the dedicated Advent reflection page on the diocesan website, which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/DHNAdvent> .

**Third Sunday of Advent**

’**First reading Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11**

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. ‘I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. ‘For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.’

**Responsorial Psalm Luke 1:46-50,53-54**

*R: My soul rejoices in my God.*

1.My soul glorifies the Lord, 2. The Almighty works marvels for me.

my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. Holy his name!

He looks on his servant in her nothingness; His mercy is from age to age,

henceforth all ages will call me blessed. on those who fear him.

3.He fills the starving with good things,

sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,

remembering his mercy.

**Second reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

**Gospel John 1:6-8,19-28**

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ‘Well then,’ they asked ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?’ So John said, ‘I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.’ Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, ‘Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?’ John replied, ‘I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.’ This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Thought for the Day

Jesus is the reason for the season.