



St John Boste Parish, West Durham
Esh, Esh Winning, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor

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Please telephone the Chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.



Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) : 9 August 2020

Recognising the presence of God: It was on Monday evening, 23 March that the Prime Minister announced the lock-down. The days following were like a national stunned silence. As the days passed, we adjusted to this new way of living but, as the warm sunny weather continued day after day, the physical silence remained. Sometimes, at the back of the house in Ushaw Moor, there was no sound of traffic, machinery or even human voices. There was a complete silence - apart from the birds singing. Several people have told me that, while they could not come to church to share in the mass, they did have a new sense of God being close. This is where we can look at today's reading from the first book of the Kings. It was around 860 BC and the holy man, Elijah, had been hounded out of town by King Ahab and his wife, Queen Jezebel. In fear of his life, Elijah took refuge in the hills hoping, perhaps, for some big dramatic sign that God was with him. But it wasn't in anything earth shattering that God showed himself. It was in the stillness; it was in the silence that he sensed the presence of God.



'Elijah went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord." Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.' (1 Kings 19: 11-13)

This idea of silence, peace, and God is picked up in today's psalm, especially in the opening words:

'I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace. His help is near for those who fear him, and his glory will dwell in our land. Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth, and justice look down from heaven. The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps.' (Psalm 84)

In that first reading, Elijah witnessed winds, earthquakes, fire. But it was in the sound of a gentle breeze that he sensed the presence of the Lord. In today's gospel the disciples of Jesus are also scared, scared of the raging storm which threatens to swamp them while they are on their fishing boat. We too can sometimes feel overwhelmed by situations in our lives; things we feel we can't handle, things that keep us awake at night, 'storms' that threaten to overwhelm us. Let's be aware of our own 'storms in life' as we look at today's gospel:

'Jesus made the disciples get into the boat while he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. But at once Jesus cried out to them saying, Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid!' It was Peter who answered, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water." "Come," said Jesus. Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. "Lord, save me!" he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "Man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And, as they got into the boat, the wind dropped. They bowed down before him and said "Truly, you are the Son of God".' (Matthew 14: 22-33)

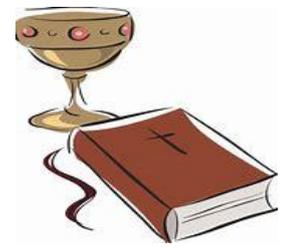


Anniversaries: St Joseph's: Anne Rodgers, Violet Joyce, Jane Mountain, Irene Ramm, Sandra Fletcher, Edward Joyce, Ruby Stoddart, Norman Laidman, Isabella Husband, Steven Griffin, Bernard Joyce, Monica Mitten.

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs: Charlotte McKenna, Susan Sands, George Makepeace, Eileen Briggs, George Johnson, Richard Turner, John Jones, John Carr, James Emmerson, Mary Morland.

St Michael's: James McDermott, Kathleen Calvert, Jane Hogan, James Quigley, Eileen Quinn, Ellen Carey, John Lynn, Monica Wardle.

Recently Dec'd: Terrie Riddle, former teacher at St Joseph's RC Primary School, Ushaw Moor, may she rest in peace.



Re-opening our churches: If you have recently been to St Joseph's church for any of the 'individual prayer' opportunities you will be aware that the church looks a little bit different from when you last saw it. Social distancing means that there needs to be 2 metres from other people in every direction, meaning a maximum of 23 people in the church (though this can increase a little if people from one household/ 'bubble' arrive together and sit together). **From Saturday, 8 August it is now obligatory to wear a face covering in all enclosed public spaces, including churches.** We are hoping to celebrate mass in St Joseph's next Sunday, 16 August at 10.00am. You will need to sanitise your hands on coming into the church and then be led to a specific seat by a steward (not necessarily your favourite seat, I'm afraid). Since some people have specifically asked, you may wish to leave your collection envelope/ cash donation in a basket *before* sanitising your hands. There will be no singing at mass because, in projecting the voice, there can be more chance of spreading germs. Holy Communion will be distributed at the very end of mass with people unhooking their face covering just before receiving Holy Communion, then fastening it immediately afterwards; communicants then leave immediately by the side door without congregating outside. Please bring as little as possible with you as you will need to carry everything as you proceed for Holy Communion and then leave the church. We may also need a few more stewards who can welcome people and explain the procedure. This procedure is not difficult, but different to what we are used to. Quite understandably, this may well put some people off coming to church but please remember that, at present, the obligation to come to mass remains relaxed. You only need to come to church *if you feel comfortable in coming*. And, because of so few people able to attend mass at any one time, we will need to have a booking system. **If you would like to come to our mass next Sunday please phone Christine Brennan on 0191- 366 9465 between 2.00 – 6.00pm this coming Wednesday.** And, in a spirit of fairness, I ask that you do not book a place for mass every week; we can only have 23 people, so we need to give a chance to all who may wish to attend over the weeks. As I have mentioned a few times recently, each building needs a thorough deep clean before its first opening but then needs a simpler cleaning of benches and surfaces before every further opening of every church for prayer, masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Once the initial deep clean has been done we follow a strict cleaning protocol which is straightforward and the cleaning can now be done in less than 30 minutes. However, it wouldn't be fair to expect the same group of people to have to clean churches in advance of every service so we have now started to compile teams, with four cleaners in each, from across the whole of our new amalgamated parish and not just from Ushaw Moor. Cleaners from Team C will gather to clean the church during the course of this week; do please bring your buckets again! So, having said all this, would **you** like to lighten the load by helping with cleaning or stewarding?

- If you are in the [clinically extremely vulnerable group](#), you must not volunteer at this time.
- If you are in the [clinically vulnerable group](#) you could be at a higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19.
- For more information please [read page 3 of our handbook for the reopening of churches](#) on the diocesan website [redhn.org.uk] This includes links to HM Government guidance.

If **you** would like to volunteer to clean our churches, please contact the Parish Office: you can phone 0191-373 0219 or you can email: stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com



NEPACS is a North-East charity which aims to promote a positive future for prisoners, offenders and their relatives by supporting family ties at every stage of the criminal justice system. Some of our parishioners volunteer with

NEPACS, and we regularly support their appeal for toiletries and other basic items to help prisoners on their release. A representative of NEPACS will give us a Zoom presentation on the work of the charity on **Thursday 20th August at 7.00pm**. Put the date in your diary now.

Contributions: Because people don't have an opportunity to put money into the collection baskets at mass just now then a number of people have recently been seeking information about direct debits. This is certainly an easier system to use in our present situation. If you are interested in creating a direct debit to the parish then let us know at the Parish Office and someone will be in touch with how best to do it.

Ushaw Moor Catholic Club now open from 7pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday (bingo).

Parish Centre at Newhouse: We are looking for someone who might be able to take over from Mary Rochford as secretary for our Parish Centre. Mary can provide all the necessary information to someone who has a naturally organised mind and is happy to be involved in sorting out the occasional contract and keeping the paperwork in order so that everything in the Parish Centre flows smoothly. Offers of help happily accepted at the Parish Office: email stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com or phone 0191-373 0219. In the meantime, very many thanks to Mary for her work over the years.

August 15th: Next Saturday sees 75 years since VJ Day. There had been a plan to 'ring out the bells for peace' at 11.10am but, like so many other things, this is less possible to do in our churches at present. However, I am sure there will be something significant on the news next weekend.

Readings next week: Next Sunday we will be celebrating the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into the glory of heaven. Scripture readings: Apocalypse 11: 19 and 12: 1-6, 10; Psalm 44; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26; Luke 1: 39-56.