



**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.*



**Twenty third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) : 6 September 2020**

**Is religion 'private'?** You should never speak about religion or politics, we are told, because they both lead to arguments. This can often be true. But should we really never speak to others about these things? Our inner faith colours our lives, our attitudes, our priorities; our religion is how we celebrate with others, in a communal way, that faith that we share. Should we really not let people know what motivates our decision-making, what makes us tick? Then how can people get to know the real 'me', what I believe and who I am? Each of today's readings suggest that our faith in God *must* influence our daily lives! The man called Ezekiel was a Jewish priest during the time the people were exiled in Babylon, far away from Jerusalem. Because of being exiled, the people were beginning to think that God had abandoned them, and that the ways of God no longer applied. So, Ezekiel speaks today:

*'The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, "Son of man, I appoint you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man, 'Wicked wretch, you are to die', and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you *do* warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'* (Ezekiel 33: 7-9)

It can be tempting in a difficult situation to say, 'Nothing to do with me, guv!' We don't like to 'intervene'. Yet Jesus tells us that we *do* have a responsibility for one another. We can't just turn our backs, leave people to their own devices, and allow tensions to arise in our society. And this can be hard; it goes against the grain to 'get involved'. But, within a community of faith, tension needs to be resolved quickly, otherwise resentment can set in.



*'Jesus said to his disciples: "If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you; the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven. I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, is shall be there with them.'* (Matthew 18: 15-20)

- Some people seem to thrive on conflict. Most of us don't. How does conflict in your relationships affect you?
- How do you feel when, after an argument, you meet that person in church?
- How do you personally try to resolve difficult situations?
- To what extent do you feel any 'responsibility' for others?

**Recently deceased:** Betty Thompson (sister of Monica Hendry and Angela Jones). May she rest in peace.

**Anniversaries:**

**St Joseph's:** Fr Laurence Thompson, Ernest Clarke, James McLoughlin, Lawrence Taylor, Monica Dodds, Brian Elley.

**Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs:** Thomas Peel, Mary Baker, Sarah Dodds, Alan Wright, Patricia Howe, Margaret Keaveney, , Catherine Brennan.

**St Michael's:** Fr Thomas Cain (8 September 1972), John Callan, Mary Jane Beavis, Michael Brennan, Elizabeth Preston, Margaret Quigley.

**Church cleaning this week (UM):** Lyn Dumighan, Shelagh Robinson, John Flynn, Angela McKenna, Jill Cox.

**Feast day:** Tuesday: the birthday of Mary of Nazareth, the one we now refer to as 'Our' Lady.

**Readings next week: 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday:** Ecclesiasticus 27: 30 - 28:7; Psalm 102; Romans 14: 7-9; Matthew 18: 21-35

## 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**Mass sheets:** For several months 'Redemptorist Publications' has not been printing the weekly mass sheets - because there were no Sunday masses throughout the country! Now that churches are beginning to re-open for mass they are printing once more. This means that this week's newsletter should be on the correct sheet with the correct readings. Thank you for your patience.

**Gathering for mass:** We are planning to have mass at St Joseph's again next Sunday, 13 September at 10.00am. Next Sunday has long been designated as a day of special prayer for all those involved in education. If you would like to come to our mass next Sunday morning please phone the **Parish Office** this coming **THURSDAY** on **373 0219 between 10.00am – 2.00pm, or phone Christine on 3669465 between 5.00 – 6.00pm.** If you have already been to one of our masses recently then perhaps you could phone closer to 6.00pm so as to allow first chance to those who haven't yet been to mass. Let us know if you are coming as an individual, as a couple, or as a household group. When you arrive at church you will be met by someone who will check your name against the booking list and ensure we have your phone number in case of a further virus outbreak locally. 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. It is great that we can meet again at church but do, please, try not to congregate in the narthex or immediately outside the exit door. Remember too that since 8 August it is now obligatory to wear a face covering in all enclosed public spaces, including churches. As we move towards more masses, whether at St Joseph's or at our other churches, then we will certainly need more stewards who can welcome people. The role of a steward is easy enough but stewards need to be sufficiently comfortable in their role so as to allow others to feel more at ease in coming back for mass. Things inevitably are 'different'; this, plus the need to wear face coverings, may well put some people off coming to church for now 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.* 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 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, the re-opening of our churches does hinge upon our having plenty of people to assist with stewarding and cleaning. We are hoping to have the initial deep clean at *Our Lady Queen of Martyrs* at 11.00am on Saturday, 12 September and then the same at *St Michael's* at 11.00am on Saturday, 19 September. If **you** would like to volunteer to help with this cleaning – or as stewards - please contact the Parish Office: you can phone 0191-373 0219 or you can email: [stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com](mailto:stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com) Then **please bring a bucket** with you for the clean! Everything else will be provided!



**Hospital visits:** If you know of a patient who wants a visit from the Catholic Hospital Chaplain, please inform Fr Paul Tully on 01388 818544 or [frpaultully@outlook.com](mailto:frpaultully@outlook.com)

**Food Bank:** should anyone be willing and able to give (on what would, in 'normal' times, have been a collection weekend in our churches) cash donations are still much appreciated. This allows the team to fill gaps in current supply, targeting shortages effectively. Please go to the website ([durham.foodbank.org.uk](http://durham.foodbank.org.uk)) and click on the 'Donate Now' button, or you can send a cheque (made out to Durham Foodbank) to their Head Office: Mile House, Bridge End, Chester Le Street DH3 3RA.

**Jackie:** 'Hello Geordie, bonny lad! I didn't recognise you without your face mask on!'

**Our schools:** Our schools are now open again after such a long time. They closed on Friday 20 March and, between then and the start of the official school holidays on 17 July, the numbers of children in school was far fewer – largely for children of 'key workers'. Some of our children have not been in school since March and, as a result, may be feeling it difficult to adapt. Some parents too may be anxious. Yet, before the summer, our members of staff were in regular contact with the children and also with their parents. They were sending out school work for the children to do at home and also trying to support parents in their home schooling. Before the summer our staff were busy re-arranging classrooms to two metre distancing to meet the government request to have children at school for four weeks before the official summer holiday. Then, the children did not return before the summer and so, before this term began, the staff have since been making the schools as safe as possible to enable the children to do most of their activities in their classrooms without needing to mix with other groups. Classes also have specific areas in the school grounds in which to have their playtime. The past five months have been very demanding for our staff so here's hoping they have had good break since they are now once again seeking to make the children feel as safe and as comfortable as possible and, all the while, seeking to encourage them to get back into the business of learning and discovering. By chance, next Sunday had long been designated as a day of special prayer for all those involved in education. How fortuitous is that! So, rather than just *recognise* what our staff have been doing for our children and their families, here is a marvellous opportunity for us to exercise our privilege as Christians and take time *to pray* for the staff of our schools – with a sense of gratitude in our hearts. And 'gratitude' and 'thankfulness'..... This is what the word 'eucharist' means!

