

St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

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Hogarth Partnership

St Anne, St Augustine, St Mary, St Osmund, Holy Family, St Teresa, St Thomas Aquinas, SS William & Francis De Sale

FoodBank: The Well:

46 East Green, West Auckland. DL14 9HJ. Opening times: Wednesday-Friday 9am - 3pm
Items may be left at the Foodbanks during their opening times or placed in St. Osmund's Church porch.

Please Pray for:

The sick of the Parish: Patrick Doherty, Nico Human, Kate Konig, Patrick Heffernan, Hilary Fletcher, Mike Griffiths, Luca Gallucci, Pat Aveson and Matthis Klein

Offertory

If you wish to make your donations directly to St. Osmund's. Bank account details are:

HSBC: D.H & N Gainford St. Osmund's.

Account No. 41164015.

Sort Code 40-34-18.

Safeguarding

The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and Diocese's policies and procedures at all times. Details of our Parish Safeguarding Representative can be found on the notice board in the porch and the Parish Centre, or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0191 2433305 or at safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk

Jubilee 2025: We celebrate this year of pilgrimage and prayer, celebration and reconciliation, seeking to be Pilgrims of Hope There's more information about the Jubilee Year on the Diocesan website at <https://www.bit.ly/DHNjubilee2025>. To aid your journey through this jubilee year, **copies of a companion booklet are available at the back of church.** A donation of £1 is suggested.



2nd Sunday of Advent

Theme: The Kingdom is close

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

St Osmund's will be open for Parish Mass on Tuesdays at 10.00am.

Saturday 6th December 6.30pm

Sunday 14th December 9.30am

Saturday 20th December 6.30pm

Sunday 28th December 9.30am

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Monday 8th December

Mass 10.00am

Children's Liturgy

There will be Children's Liturgy on Sunday 14th December

Peace for the people of Ukraine

We continue to pray earnestly for peace in Ukraine, joining our prayers to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart – may her prayers bring a swift end to the conflict, and consolation to the bereaved and to the many thousands of refugees.

Foodbank – we recently received a card from the foodbank with the following note:

To all at St Osmund's Church, Gainford

Thank you all so very much for your regular and faithful giving over many years to the foodbank at The Well. Your gifts have been amazing throughout the different seasons and we are so grateful for the generosity and care shown by so many towards those who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

Thank you for your compassion and desire to help others. We know the Lord will bless you in your giving.

"The Lord blesses everyone who freely gives food to the poor."

Proverbs 22:9

DAR – Darlington Assistance for Refugees

This Advent, **Churches Together in Gainford** are raising money to support **DAR** in their projects.

Please give by putting your donation in our Advent Collection Box

First reading Isaiah 11:1-10

‘With righteousness he shall judge the poor.’

On that day:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples — of him shall the nations enquire, and his resting-place shall be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm 72(71):1-2,7-8,12-13, 17 R cf.7

In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace for ever.

O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king’s son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice,
and your poor in right judgement.

In his days justice shall flourish,
and great peace till the moon is no more.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the River to the bounds of the earth.

For he shall rescue the needy when they cry, the poor who have no one to help. He will have pity on the weak and the needy, and save the lives of the needy.

May his name endure for ever,
his name continue like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blest in him,
all nations shall call him blessed.

Second reading Romans 15:4-9

Christ saves humanity.

Brothers and sisters: Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of

endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.’

Gospel Acclamation Luke 3: 4, 6

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia.

Gospel Matthew 3:1-12

‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.” ’

Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father”, for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ‘I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’ Copyright: The readings are from the Jerusalem Bible published by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd 2019

Feast Days this week

Monday 8th December: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Tuesday 9th December: St Juan Diego
Cauauhtlatotzin

Wednesday 10th December: Our Lady of Loreto,
St John Roberts (Wales)

Thursday 11th December: St Damasus I

Friday 12th December: Our Lady of Guadalupe, St Finian (Ireland)

Saturday 13th December: St Lucy

Preparing the way of the Lord

John the Baptist could be the central figure in our thoughts today. He prepared the way for the people of his time to understand the good news of their salvation. That is the way God normally works; He sends the message of salvation to us through each other. As St Paul once put it, how can people know the truth about God if they have never heard it; and how can they hear if nobody is sent to them?

Jesus found his first disciples among those who were influenced by the preaching of John the Baptist. He had showed them the value of self-control and of prayer; he urged them to listen to the inner voice of God, with repentance and a faithful heart. The high point of John's short ministry was his meeting with Jesus. Not only did he get to baptise Our Lord but he also helped some of his own followers to go with Jesus and become the first Christian disciples. Through him, Andrew and his brother Peter, and Philip and Nathanael became apostles of Jesus.

Clearly, God wishes us Christians also to help help other people to know and love him. If in the first place, we were more committed to our own Christian calling, we would be more effective in influencing others towards religious commitment. Parents have the first opportunity to point their children towards God. But their words will only be effective when backed up by the actual example of their own faith and prayer.

People can influence others, for good or ill, in all sorts of ways. A special kind of influence rests with the journalists and opinion-formers who work in the media, press, radio and television and through the internet. But ordinary people outside the media can also influence the views and values of those with whom they talk and live. When looked at in light of today's Gospel, does our way of speaking and behaving in any way help others to share our values, or do we confirm their suspicion that this world is a selfish and cynical place?

And what about fostering vocations to some active form of church service? The ability of our Church to go on as a visible, organised community continuing in the prayer-life and values of Jesus is under serious question today. If people open their hearts to inspiration, Andrew and Philip and Peter, a way will be found to spread the saving message of Christ. associationofcatholicpriests.ie

The Cycle of Prayer

Migrants and Refugees

especially on 3 December, Feast of St Francis Xavier

Background

On December 3rd the Church commemorates St Francis Xavier. This is the day chosen by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People to mark World Migration Day. Each year there is a message from the Holy Father reflecting on the 'signs of the times'.

Asylum seekers and refugees — I wish to underline how the tendency is to stop at the question of their arrival while disregarding the reasons for which they left their native land. [Benedict XVI - Message for World Migration day 2005]

Prayer

*Lord, no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever
far from your loving care.
In your kindness watch over
refugees and exiles,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left
or run away from home.
Bring them back safely
to the place where they long to be
and help us always
to show your kindness
to strangers and those in need.*

Roman Missal: For Refugees and Exiles

Neurodiversity and our Faith Research

We have been asked to share the following. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and Birmingham Newman University are conducting research into Neurodiversity and our Faith. If you are an adult neurodivergent Catholic or a caregiver of a neurodivergent Catholic, they would like to hear from you. Your experiences will help them to become more inclusive and responsive to your needs.

To find out more and to complete the short surveys, please visit: www.godwhospeaks.uk/neurodivergent-catholic-surveys

Make Your Giving Go Further with Gift Aid!

Did you know that if you're a UK taxpayer, your donations to the parish can go even further at no extra cost to you? With Gift Aid, the government adds 25% to your gift, helping us support our church, ministries, and community projects even more!

Sign up today by contacting your local parish Gift Aid Organiser or visit <https://forms.office.com/e/BrxQTPnn3a?origin=lprLink>

Together, we can strengthen our parish and continue our mission to serve God and our community. Thank you for your generosity!

Pope S. Damasus

This week is rather busy with celebrations, some old and some new, which are linked to Our Lady; but there is also the celebration of a Pope – S. Damasus. Not one of the most famous of the Popes or the Saints, but one who has had a significant influence on the Church over the centuries. Born c. 305, a time when the Church was still illegal, as he grew up the peace of the Church changed the circumstances in which the Faith was lived dramatically. He was raised in Rome in a Christian family, and indeed his father became a Priest – Damasus followed his example serving at the Church of S. Lawrence.

He was elected as Pope in 366; however this was before the relatively calm and stable electoral system which we saw earlier this year. There was an alternative candidate, Ursinus, chosen by a rival election, this saw physical violence in the streets (and even in churches) between supporters of the two claimants. The matter was finally settled in 378 with a synod affirming Damasus as Pope. There were a number of allegations of impropriety made against Damasus at this time, these seem to have arisen from supporters of Ursinus, but also from Arians who continued to push their ideas in the West.

Damasus was a strong upholder of Nicene Orthodoxy, this was particularly aimed at the Arians (who considered that the Son was not fully God, and a lesser being than the Father). He was also heavily involved in combatting Apollinarianism and Macedonianism. The former of these arose from the debates about Christ's nature, and how he could be both God and man; it claimed that he had a human body and soul, but that the humanity of his mind was replaced by the Divine Logos (the Word). This would have caused him not to be fully human, and therefore not really one of us. Macedonianism (also known as Semi-Arianism or Pneumatomachianism, I had to check the

spelling there) believed that the Son was 'similar' to the Father but not of the same substance (consubstantial, as we profess in the Creed); and also that the Holy Spirit was a creation of the Son and therefore not part of the Godhead. The second œcumenical council (the First Council of Constantinople) was called to address these issues, and condemned both as heresies.

Damasus was recognised across the Church as being a firm upholder of orthodox teaching, and was often called on to provide support in other parts of the Church. Notably assisting the famous S. Athanasius and his successor Peter II of Alexandria, the latter of whom was given a welcome in Rome when he had to flee his own diocese for upholding the teachings of the Council of Nicaea.

He was also well-known for his devotion to the martyrs, Rome had produced so many during the years of persecution, and at this time their burial places were clearly catalogued and marked – often with inscriptions written by Damasus himself.

It is with regard to Scripture that Damasus had the greatest influence. He held a synod in Rome in 382 which, among other matters, issued a list of the books of the Bible, thus settling the Canon of Scripture as we have it today. He had had S. Jerome as his confidential secretary, and so when he recognised that the Latin text of the Bible then used could usefully be revised it was to S. Jerome that he turned. This resulted in the 'Vulgate', which became the standard Latin text of Scripture – therefore used throughout the Western Church for centuries, both in worship and theological study.

S. Damasus' name does not resonate so loudly as other Saints; however, his work in defending orthodox beliefs and providing the Church with a reliable text of the Bible allow his influence to live on, to the glory of God. – **Fr. Thomas.**

Communion from the chalice

. If you are interested in helping with the Mass in this way, please let Fr. Thomas know.

School Governors – please take a moment to look at the poster in the porch regarding schools governors, and consider whether this could be a way in which you would be willing to help in the life and mission of the Church.

Parish Council Meeting Minutes: Available to view on the noticeboard in the Parish Centre

Cafod World Gifts

Cafod have sent copies of this year's brochure for 'World Gifts', copies are available at the back of church if you would like to buy some of these alternative gifts.

Walk with Me Advent Booklets

A Journey of Prayer for the Advent Jubilee 2025 are available at the back of church **Price £1**
Advent Calendars for our young people will also be available **Free**. Please pick one up

Cake Sale in the Parish Centre, St Osmund's on Sunday 14th December after Mass

A flier will be available at church with more information about **DAR**

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me".

Matthew 25:40

Best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy week ahead

**Weekly Reflection and Daily Readings for Advent**

2025. Advent is a time of preparation and to reflect, and hold onto, the messages of hope, peace, joy and love which God promised to us in the birth of Christ Jesus.

Members of our Diocesan Writing Team offer this Advent resource to help guide a daily space for reading of the Scripture, reflection and prayer. In it you will find a reflection based on the theme of each week of Advent and an easy-to-follow reference to the readings for each day. The reflections will be available to view and download on the homepage of the Diocesan website from Friday 28 November www.diocesehn.org.uk

Parish Census

Please remember to complete and return the Parish Census Form