

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: 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](tel:01912433305) or at safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk

Copies of the Northern Catholic Calendar, and the Diocesan Ordo (list of feasts for each day of the year) have arrived and are available at the back of church – suggested donation £3



4th Sunday of Lent

Theme: From darkness into light

Brothers and Sisters: At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true,

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

Saturday 14th March 6.30pm

Sunday 22nd March 9.30 am

Saturday 28th March 6.30pm

Easter Sunday 5th April 9.30am

Children's Liturgy

There is a Children's Liturgy on Sunday 22nd March

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.

Darlington Assistance for Refugees recently wrote regarding the funds which we raised for them during Advent, and how they are putting them to use providing much needed support to those in need and far from home:

A cheque has just dropped through our letterbox for £258.55!

Thank you so much to all of you for this. This will keep our cooking group going for 3 more months whilst we wait to hear if we have gained further funding from the National Lottery. It will include room/kitchen hire and food.

Lent Lunches The annual lent lunches organised by Churches Together in Gainford will take place on two Tuesdays. 10 March, here at St Osmund's, and 24 March at St Mary's. These will be raising funds for Darlington Assistance for Refugees (whom we supported in Advent, and who spoke at the Churches Together A.G.M.).



Cake Sale for DAR

Sunday March 22nd after Mass

First reading 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13**David is anointed king of Israel.**

In those days: The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.' And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 23(22): 1-6. R1**The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul.

He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of
death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.

Second reading Ephesians 5:P8-14**'Arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'**

Brothers and Sisters: At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything

that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

Gospel Acclamation John 8:12**Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**Gospel John 9:1-41****'He went and washed and received his sight.'**

At that time: As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." So I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?' And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, 'Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' And they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?' And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.' He said, 'Lord, I believe', and he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'

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Feast Days this week

Tuesday 17th March: St Patrick

Wednesday 18th March: St Cyril of Rome

Thursday 19th March: St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Diocesan Pastoral Strategy Following Bishop Stephen's recent pastoral letter (printed copies at the back of church if you haven't got one), we enter into a period of discernment as a parish regarding our mission and how best to fulfil it. The P.P.C. will meet shortly to reflect, and this will be followed by reflection on the part of the whole parish. Please keep this matter in your thoughts and prayers.

The diocese has material to assist with discernment on its web-site, including a recording of a webinar which took place seeking to unpack the process. <https://diocesehn.org.uk/pastoral-strategy/>

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!

Disabled parking spaces: A gentle reminder that the space at the top of the drive is reserved for those less able to walk.

The Cycle of Prayer

Candidates for the Sacraments

especially on the Sundays of Lent

Background

For those preparing to be initiated into the Church at Easter, Lent marks the final stage of preparation, the period of Purification and Enlightenment. It begins with the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent. During the season of Lent the Scrutinies are celebrated on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays in preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Many parishes will also receive candidates for Reception into the Church.

"The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptised."

"During Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, the faithful should take care to participate in the rites of the scrutinies and presentations and give the elect the example of their own renewal in the spirit of penance, faith, and charity. At the Easter Vigil, they should attach great importance to renewing their own baptismal promises." RCIA 9
The celebration of other Sacraments, such as Confirmation and First Holy Communion, will often take place within the Easter season so that candidates for these Sacraments will also be preparing in Lent. These candidates should also be remembered in the prayers of the community.

Prayer

*Father of love and power,
it is your will to establish everything in Christ
and to draw us into his all-embracing love.
Guide the elect of your Church:
strengthen them in their vocation,
build them into the kingdom of your Son,
and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.*

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Roman Missal (adapted)

Open the eyes of my soul, Lord

It's hard to know why Jesus went through the ritual of the spittle, the mud, and the water, in order to heal the man. He healed other blind people with a touch, or simply a word. It might well have been a test of faith. He sent the ten lepers on their way, and they were healed as they journeyed along. He sent the centurion home and, before he reached home he got word that his servant was healed. I often think that this is how Jesus heals many of us. We ask for his healing, and nothing seems to happen immediately. Maybe, after asking for his healing, we should go on our way, and expect to notice the healing taking place gradually as time goes by.

As the story unfolds, we notice that the man's eyes were really opened, and that includes the eyes of his soul. Clearly Jesus was intent on healing the total person, or not at all. We don't imagine him healing someone, and then having that person going away still filled with resentment against another. Such a person was not really healed at all. The man in today's gospel was totally healed, and he ended up on his knees, worshipping Jesus.

A practical and simple prayer is "Lord, that I may see." It is a short prayer, but when it comes from the depths of my heart, it is a powerful prayer. Remember that other blind man named Bartimeus? He was told that Jesus was passing by, and he was determined to get his attention. Those around him tried to silence him, but he shouted all the louder. And he also was cured. To another man Jesus asked the pointed question, "Do you want to be healed?"

The greatest good we can do for others is not by giving them money, though that can also be needed at times, but in revealing their own riches to them. It is good to affirm others and make them feel both loved and worthwhile. Many people have grown up with a poor self-image, and they just cannot see the good in themselves. This is another form of blindness, and it is a blindness in others that any one of us can heal. The most certain proof that the Spirit of God lives in you is your willingness and ability to affirm and bring a blessing to other people. associationofcatholicpriests.ie

Assyrian Christianity

It is with great sadness that our minds are taken, yet again, to a war in the Middle East. We are used to thinking of this as a complex area with various tribal groups and affinities; but for the most part we think of it as a place of Islamic culture and religion, while this is the clear majority there are also ancient Christian communities there, though sadly they sit under great strain and stress with many having fled the region to find calmer environments. One of these is the Assyrian Church whose homelands spread across modern-day Iraq and Iran, but which was also the source of missionary efforts which spread as far as India, China, and even Mongolia. The Assyrian Church, or the Church of the East, traces its foundation back to some of the earliest evangelists the Church sent out. According to tradition, S. Thomas preached the Gospel in modern-day Iraq (before continuing to India); additionally S. Addai of Edessa is believed to have been one of the seventy disciples of Christ and along with his disciple S. Mari of Edessa are venerated as the Apostles of Persia.

Those parts of the Church which were outside of the Roman Empire were inevitably somewhat distinct after Constantine (which led to a close working relationship between the Church and Empire). When the Christological debates began, these eastern parts of the Church were sympathetic to the position of Nestorius and when this was repudiated by the First Council of Ephesus in 431 they split away. This separation actually helped the Church of the East, the Sasanian (Persian) Empire recognised that they were not agents of the Romans and gave them greater freedom. This also led them to face towards the East when it came to missionary work. When the Islamic Conquest replaced the Sasanian Empire the Church was given 'dhimmi' status – this involved fewer rights than for Muslims, but not outright persecution. They were prohibited from seeking to

evangelise Muslims, but were left free to work among non-Muslims in India and China.

In the sixteenth centuries some groups within the Church of the East were reconciled to the Catholic Church, being recognised as Pope Julius III in 1550; eventually these groups became the Chaldean Catholic Church, one of the Eastern Catholic Churches and today the largest Christian community in Iraq. Some of the Indian parts of the Church were also united to the Catholic Church, becoming the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. Among those who stayed separated from the Catholic Church, there were a number of internal splits which greatly weakened it; however, it continues to operate in its traditional homeland of Iran, Iraq, and Syria; as well as in diaspora communities mostly in the West. The term 'Assyrian' encompasses both this strand of Christianity, as well as an ethnic identity based in that homeland.

Unlike other apostolic parts of Christianity, the Church of the East does not use icons; however, there is historical evidence that this is a more recent development under pressure from Islam. It uses ritual life known as the 'East Syrian Rite', one of its most striking elements is the 'anaphora of Addai and Mari' which does not include the description of the last supper which we recognise as consecrating the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

In more recent times, the Church has grown close to the Catholic Church. The debates over Christology have been continued, and a Common Christological Declaration was issued by the Church of the East and the Catholic Church in 1994; there are circumstances when the faithful of each are allowed to receive the Sacraments in the other body. The Church of the East has a long and rich history, in its homeland it form an embattled minority; we pray that its members are aware of the presence and closeness of God, and that their faithfulness is rewarded by peace and safety. – **Fr. Thomas.**

Best wishes for a safe , happy and healthy week ahead

