

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, 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.

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/Brx2TPm3a?origin=lprLink>

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

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



October: Month of the Holy Rosary

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time Theme: Everyone is invited

"The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find."

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

Sunday 11th October 9.30am

Saturday 17th October 6.30pm

Sunday 25th October 9.30am

Saturday 31st October 6.30pm

Church Restoration – a great pleasure to be back in church for Mass, and especially to see the excellent work on the ceiling and walls. Thank you to everybody who worked hard cleaning church last week; but especially to Rachael for tirelessly running the whole project.

Children's Liturgy

The Children's Liturgy will resume this Sunday 11th October

First Holy Communion – forms are available for **First Holy Communion**. If you know of any children in Year 4 who would be interested, please do pass forms on.



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.

World Mission Sunday – next Sunday is World Mission Sunday, there will be a collection for the world of *Mission* supporting missions across the world.

First reading Isaiah 25:6-10

'The Lord will make a feast, and he will wipe away tears from all faces.'

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

Responsorial Psalm 23(22): 1-6. R1

**In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.**

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 Philippians 4: 12-14, 19-20

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me.'

Brothers and Sisters: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation Gf. Ephesians 1:17-18

Alleluia, alleluia. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which he has called us.

Alleluia.

Gospel Matthew 22:1-14

'Invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'

At that time: Jesus again spoke to the chief priests and the elders of the people, in parables, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' " But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 'But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

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Feast days this week

Monday 12th October: St Wilfred, St Carlo Acutis

Tuesday 13th October: St Edward the Confessor

Wednesday 14th October: St Callistus

Thursday 15th: St Teresa of Avila

Friday 16th October: St Margaret Mary Alacoque, St Richard Gwyn (Wales)

Saturday 17th October: St Ignatius of Antioch

The Cycle of Prayer - Prisoners and their Families especially on Prisoners Sunday (2nd Sunday on October) and in Prisons Week (2nd Week in October)

Background

Prisoner's week was a Catholic initiative begun in 1975 by Bishop Victor Guazelli which has since ecumenical support and observance. It reflects the work of the Prison Advice and Care Trust which builds on its origins as the Bourne Trust — the Catholic Prisoner's Aid Society. The Sunday and the following week seek to focus attention not only on the needs of prisoners but on all those involved the field of prison care, prisoners families, victims of crime, prison staff and many volunteers.

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, to whom alone the secrets of the heart lie open, who recognise the just and make righteous the guilty, bear our prayers for your servants held in prison, and grant that through patience and hope they may find relief in their affliction and soon return unbinders to their own.

Roman Missal

What of heaven?

Our notion of heaven derives largely from what we regard as most desirable in this world. Such was always the case. Every age reinvents heaven to mirror its own time. What is depicted tells us more about conditions here than in the hereafter. The idea of its being a marriage feast has little appeal for some of us. Like most priests, I have had more than my share of wedding receptions in this world, with their invariable menus of turkey and ham, to have any desire for more of the same in the next. Yet, there was a time in my life when food came high on the list of desirables. The smell of fried eggs and bacon from the staff dining-room in my boarding-school days could transport me to another world!

Such was the bleakness of the lives of most people in biblical and other times, when food was basic and scarce, it is not surprising that Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a royal wedding feast. There was of course a political agenda behind those royal banquets. They helped to insure that the heir to the throne would be accepted and loved by his poorer subjects. Caesars and senators in ancient Rome were accustomed to sponsor gladiatorial contests and other bloody spectacles for much the same reason. Cynical Romans were well aware that their acquiescence in, if not allegiance to, the ruling junta, was being bought with 'bread and circuses'. Vestiges of the same still survive today as richer countries vie with each other to host the Olympic Games or the World Cup.

In the parable Jesus spoke to the religious hierarchy of his time. They were his prime target and they knew it. Already they had plans to rid themselves of this rabble-rousing rabbi, for they were too preoccupied with clinging to privilege and power to accept God's invitation to the wedding-feast. Others had their 'farms' and their 'businesses', their deals and the social whirl. Unhappy with being reprimanded for their dubious practices, they rejected the prophetic messengers sent to warn them that the feast was ready. This story goes on finding in every age a new target audience. Maybe Curial executive types who run the local churches like regional subsidiaries of a giant international company should take the warning nowadays. But they are not alone. It would be comforting to think of ourselves as too ordinary to be included, or that we are among those at the crossroads who finally fill the wedding-hall. Our baptism placed us squarely on the guest list. Our profession of faith every Sunday confirms it. But our actual priorities might still keep us from making to the wedding feast.

It used to be thought that heaven was the better of the two options on offer when we die. The Christian truth is that the offer of heaven is made here and now; for death only fixes for eternity the choice we actually make in this life. We have already received our invitations. We have been tagged with an RSVP. -We are already making our responses by the priorities we choose here and now.

The eternal banquet must not be abandoned as so much "pie in the sky"! Christians don't literally expect to sit down to an everlasting meal, an eternal eating and drinking festival somewhere in the stratosphere. While heaven is described in vivid anthropomorphic images, we realize that "eye has not seen.. nor can the human heart imagine, what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor 2:9.) Still, the banqueting atmosphere of friendly conviviality is a good image for that perfect loving communion with God and with others towards which our lives are destined.

Jesus emphasises that this wedding-banquet is open to all people indeed, that God sends his messengers out to scour the highways and byways in order to fill his house with guests. It is a comforting thought that God wants us to be saved, even more than we do ourselves.

On the other hand, there is a special regalia or wedding-garment that must be worn. This is the level of personal commitment required, in order to accept our place at the wedding feast. I like to think that this refers primarily to community spirit, an ability to share our well-being with other people, in the presence of God. Though founded on faith in God's creative love, Christian hope retains a strong ethical dimension. Our wedding-garment is therefore being woven daily, by the quality of our interaction with others. In this sense, we hold tomorrow in our own hands, as with the help of God's grace we build our own eternal future. associationofcatholicpriests.ie

I was in prison and you visited me – S. Matthew 25:36

Today the Church marks Prisoners' Sunday, and so take the time to remind us that visiting (or otherwise supporting) those imprisoned is one of the works of mercy which we are all encouraged to undertake. Seeking to care for those in prison, and those affected by imprisonment has always been part of the Church's ministry, and will always remain so.

It should be said that this isn't a commentary on public policy, still less is it seeking to undermine the justice system. It is entirely legitimate for the state to punish those who have done wrong, and this legitimately includes confining criminals to prison for a period of time (even for the rest of their lives in some cases). It is also not a suggestion that prison has to be made 'soft'. The precise details of justice policy are points on which Catholics (like all people) can have a whole variety of legitimate views. However, one point which we can never ignore is that all people (including prisoners) are made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore their dignity needs to be upheld even in the midst of their punishment.

As a seminarian I spent a year visiting a young offenders institute each week as part of my pastoral formation; it was powerful to meet with young men in that situation. I wasn't told what crime any of them had committed, but given that they were typically serving sentences between 5 and 10 years, this was just some petty theft. But yet, they were still God's children, beloved by him. An institution like a prison is often rather dehumanising, but their weekly meeting with a chaplain and a visiting priest was a moment when they could be treated just as a person.

It was also clear that one of the greatest challenges was relations with their families. In several cases they had children, as well as partners on the outside. These were significantly affected by the imprisonment even though they had nothing to do with the crimes committed. Supporting prisoners in their attempts to retain contact with their families is vital if they are to re-enter society well at the end of their sentences. One of the members of the Catholic chaplaincy there was a permanent deacon who was married with children (albeit now grown up), he was able to offer sessions in how to be a father, covering all practicalities including how to change a nappy. If a released prisoner can go on to be a good father, then the chance of his children becoming offenders is dramatically reduced.

But there were also many signs of the troubles faced. Levels of literacy were very low, partially this was due to a lack of engagement at school; but also a number of specific learning difficulties which hadn't been identified or catered for at school. Despite many attempts at security drugs were clearly a constant issue on the wings. At least one prisoner had very visible marks from a history of self-harming. The prison system finds itself overwhelmed and unable to provide effective solutions to these problems.

Our concern is also, indeed primarily, spiritual. Many prisoners are Catholics and so can be encouraged through access to the sacraments, and support in our prayers. In prison there is often a strong pressure over religious matters, it becomes a tribal identity and many find heavy pressure to convert to other religions.

We do not for a moment deny the necessity of punishment for crimes, nor of the primary importance of care for the victims of crime; but the very words of Christ command us to care for the outcast, including the prisoner. Today, but also throughout the year, let our prayers and practical support be there for prisoners and their families. There is a significant Catholic ministry to prisons – PACT, the Prison Advice and Care Trust – which has Archbishop Richard Moth of Westminster as its President. Their website includes information on we can provide that spiritual support: <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk>

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Thank you to Ray Abbott from Darlington S.V.P. who spoke to us last week. A reminder that there will be an open meeting for all interesting in the work of the S.V.P. at S. Augustine's Parish Centre on 19 October.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy week ahead

