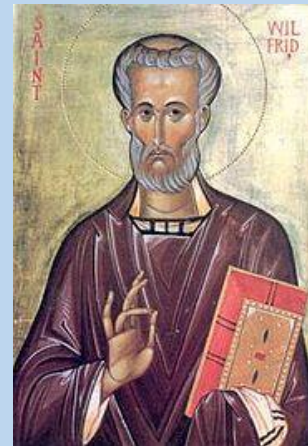


Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 16th August
2020 Joint Parishes of St Joseph's and St Wilfrid's Gateshead
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Today is the Feast Day of St Stephen of Hungary



C. 975 – 1038

Patron Saint of Hungary and of kings

Baptized by his pagan father, made King by the Pope, his heirs demolished his legacy

Named Vaik at birth, the date of which we can only guess, as ancient chronicles give conflicting dates, he was later Baptised Stephen, by his father, a duke, when he converted to Christianity. The Mediterranean Basin had long been Christian by the tenth century. But

daring missionaries had only recently penetrated deep into the wide plains of the Magyars, the Bulgars, and that vast land of the Rus that lay beyond.

When Stephen was about twenty-two, he succeeded his father as a Magyar leader and warlord. After consolidating his territory and power through various wars, he sent an emissary to the Pope in Rome to petition for the founding of Church structures in his land. Pope Sylvester II concurred with Stephen's plans and took him one step further. Tradition holds that the Pope had a crown fashioned for Stephen and sent it to Hungary, where the papal ambassador crowned Stephen king in 1001.

King Stephen took his duties as a Catholic king with utmost seriousness. He founded an enormous Benedictine monastery, numerous dioceses, and mandated one tax-supported parish with a priest for every ten towns. He built a shrine to the Virgin Mary, which became the sacred forum for the coronations, and burials, of the kings of Hungary. He aggressively punished those who practiced the outlawed pagan customs and prohibited marriages between pagans and Christians. Interestingly, he required that all his subjects be married, except for priests and religious.

Stephen died on August 15, 1038. Most of his children had died as infants, and his one adult son, his presumptive heir, died in a hunting accident in 1031. Thus, Stephen's efforts to establish a Christian state were placed in jeopardy, with the mighty king dead, all his accomplishments were neglected. Chaos and civil war raged for decades after his burial and Stephen's Christian efforts and his immediate legacy dissipated.

Eventually, order was restored to Hungary, and Stephen's greatness was recognized. He was canonized in 1083 and is now a revered saint-founder of the Hungarian nation. The Huns, the Goths, and the Vandals do not have a nation today. Over time, these pagan tribes were absorbed into the stable cultures they invaded. They melted into the many nations and identities of modern Europe. The Magyars, however, did not disappear, merge with other peoples, or melt away. They have their own nation, language, culture, art, and history. They are the people of Hungary, and they owe their enduring identity to Saint Stephen. He imposed the stability of a first-class religion on a horse-riding clan and so transformed that roaming tribe into a stable nation. Stephen gave his people God. And to God and His Church they were faithful. Hungary matured over the centuries and became a refined Christian nation, a defender of Christ and the Church. Saint Stephen was a model King because he knew that to found a country you must found a Church along with it.

Reflection

Saint Stephen, you bear the name of the first martyr of the Church and showed similar courage in battling the enemies of God. May your brave and visionary leadership embolden all civil and church leaders to lay the foundations for a success which flourishes long after they have died.



Today we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption (15th August)

(OF) Readings for today are: -

First Reading	Apocalypse 11:19; 12:1-6
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 44
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 15:20-26
Gospel	Luke 1:39-56

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour"

Today is a joyful day to rejoice in God's love for us and the promise He has given to us that we shall be with Him in Paradise. It is a Feast of REUNION: Mary with her Son in heaven: and we with them, and with all our loved ones.

Her assumption shows us our final destiny; the Resurrection of the body: fully human; and beyond the corruption of sin and death. Our Lady's body did not decay in the Tomb. She was taken up to heaven body and soul.

When Scotland and England were united by the Act of Union in 1707, the Houses of Parliament were re-ordered to make room for the Scottish Members of parliament, and an ancient painting was discovered showing King Richard offering England to Our Lady Queen of Heaven.

For centuries England has been called "the Dowry of Mary". In the middle ages the Dowry was the husband's gift to his bride. With wealthy landowners the gift was a portion of land. If you were born on that part of the husband's estate given to his bride, then you became the liegeman and servant of the Bride: Moreover the gift was forever: even if the marriage failed the land was still hers.

All over England we see the legacy of the title, "England, Our Lady's Dowry", with wildflowers called after Her, 'Ladies smock', "Ladies tresses", 'the marigold'. Rivers and streams referring to Her, "Lady well", "Mother well". Even many a local pub paid tribute, "The Salutation Inn" or "The Angel Inn" after the Annunciation.

Churches also were dedicated to her, 'Our Lady and St Wilfrid', Westminster Abbey, a Benedictine foundation is dedicated to Our Lady and St Peter: Durham cathedral to Our Lady and St Cuthbert. All Benedictine monasteries were dedicated to St Mary, hence 'Lady's Walk' in Morpeth.

In the year 1399 king Richard issued this proclamation.

"All Christian nations venerate Our Lady from whom came the beginnings of our redemption, but we English, humble servants, and liegemen of her dowry ought to excel all others in our praises and devotions to her".

Earlier this year we re-dedicated our land to Our Lady and so we ought to remember that our homes are built on land dedicated by Royal authority to the Queen of Heaven. We should all reclaim our homes for Mary and her Dowry. Enthroned her statue at home where visitors can see it. Teach our children to honour and love her. As Queen and Mother, she will protect us now and at the hour of our death.

May the homes of England be worthy of Her dowry.

Today is the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
EF readings for today are: -

Introit	Psalm 67, 6. 7. 36
Epistle	1 Corinthians 15:1-10
Gradual	Psalm 27, 7. 1
Gospel	Mark 7: 31-37

“Ephpheta,” that is “Be Opened.”

The route, taken by Jesus and His disciples as described by Mark, was circuitous, moving northwards along the coast to *Sidon*, then in a south-easterly direction (or east and then south) down to the *Lake of Galilee*, and then further south into the *Decapolis region*, (Decapolis meaning place of ten cities). Either Mark was not particularly familiar with geography of Palestine or he chose to circumscribe the whole region as a way of noting the presence of Jesus in pagan territory as a whole. It may be significant that the area described, though no longer Jewish, had originally been part of the area shared out among the tribes of Israel at the time of Joshua.

The following incident would be the first healing, as distinct from exorcisms, performed by Jesus in pagan territory.

In this incident, as in so many others, the person who was incapable of making the necessary approach had the support of others, in this case referred to but otherwise unidentified. Their hope and faith were effectively expressed in their begging Jesus to help.

In the world of the time the deaf man's affliction would have meant his being cut off from the possibility of social engagement, education, effective employment and probably friendship. In some ways his general alienation would have been even more total than that for lepers, who at least often had each other's company. The people who brought him to Jesus may possibly have been family. If they were friends, their friendship in this case would have spoken of a wonderful sensitivity and compassion.

The actions of Jesus may have been his way to communicate with the deaf man and to elicit in some vague way his permission, and perhaps even some opening to faith. There seemed also to have been a real sensitivity in his taking him away from the crowd. The man was deaf, so verbal communication was impossible. To secure the man's undivided attention he took him away from the distracting crowd. Putting his fingers into the man's ears and touching his tongue were presumably his way of conveying his intention of doing something to the man's hearing and speech. *Spittle* was sometimes seen in antiquity as a therapeutic agent. By spitting he was possibly letting the man know that he was about to heal him.

Jesus *looked up to heaven* in a gesture of prayer to his Father. He *sighed*, possibly because of his recognition of the alienating effect of the man's condition. The word *Ephphatha* was an Aramaic word, Jesus' own language. It would have probably been unintelligible to the man, but,

since he could not hear, that was irrelevant. For some reason, the detail had been preserved in the tradition.

Jesus' action of healing had a different meaning in *Gentile* territory. Among his own people it served to illustrate the intervention of *God* in their history and to interpret in action his initial proclamation of the Kingdom. Jesus did not see his sortie into *Gentile* territory as a missionary enterprise. If anything, it was to get away from the pressure mounting on the other side of the border

Jesus' insistence that they tell no one mirrored similar requests on his part in the early stages of his ministry in *Galilee*. The danger then had been that a volatile Jewish crowd would misinterpret his identity. Who could know what sense a group of pagans would have made of his action? Jesus who had moved over the border to escape notice now found that his attempt had failed.

Mark gave no clear indication why he included the incident at this stage in his narrative, indeed, why he included it at all. It may have been a reflection on the condition of the pagan world. This was a very real question for Mark's community. If that was the case, it presented a world with embryonic faith and openness to Jesus. It was a world that could not initially join in the Christian enterprise because it was ignorant of it. It could not speak because it had not heard.

Once that ignorance was removed and hearing became possible, participation in the Christian mission could follow. Yet, as with the disciples, the danger of allowing enthusiasm to cloud the essential depth of the Christian message needed to be addressed.

Mark possibly recounted the reaction of the crowd to highlight the contrasting attitudes of the disciples who were experiencing so much difficulty in hearing the message of Jesus.



Reflection

Lord Jesus, open our ears to your Word, our tongues to spreading the Good News, our hearts to Your love and mercy, our minds to the understanding of our faith

Mass Intentions This Week 17th – 23rd August 2020

Monday: John, Catherine, and Veronica wall:
Tuesday: John, Catherine, and Veronica Wall
Wednesday: John, Catherine, and Veronica Wall
Thursday: John, Catherine, and Veronica Wall
Friday: John, Catherine, and Veronica Wall
Saturday: John, Catherine, and Veronica Wall
Sunday 10.00am: People of the Parish
12 noon Elizabeth Turnbull

Mass is said at approximately 10.00am each weekday

Please remember in your prayers the sick of the parish and all those who have recently died especially Mary Donnelly who died on the 7th August

Mass intentions

please remember Canon Michael continues, as he has throughout the pandemic, to say daily Mass, if you have any intentions for Mass please put these in an envelope and pop through the letter box, or place them on the collection plate at the end of Sunday's Mass.

Re-Opening Churches

As the number of churches re-opening for the celebration of public Mass has risen greatly, they will no longer be listed here, please see the Diocesan Website for further openings.

St Wilfrid's is to be amongst the churches to reopen in phase 6, in order to do this safely we need as many volunteers as possible, the roles to make the opening a success are varied - cleaners, stewards, ushers.

Please give your name and contact details to Canon Michael, Shauna Devitt (email addresses at top of bulletin) or to Veronica Georgeson, Health and Safety representative for St Wilfrid's

The re-opening of St Joseph's last Sunday was, overall, a great success, with 25 people attending Mass at 10.00 and 30 plus arriving for Mass at Midday. Canon Michael was delighted to see so many familiar, and a few new, faces once again and he thanks everyone who made it possible to re-open for public Mass which he has greatly missed.

There were one or two small teething problems, which hopefully will be sorted out over the coming weeks. Patience and prayers are needed still for the success of our returning to a semblance of normality.

Please remember to bring a facemask with you to each Mass, this must be worn throughout the service, removing it only to receive Holy Communion.

Sanitise your hands, on entry to the church, prior to receiving Communion and as you exit church.

If you wish to be part of the 'Trace and Track' programme please remember to bring with you an envelope containing your name, contact details, the time and date of your visit. Place this in the box as you enter church, the box will be sealed at the end of the day and only opened if the need arises, otherwise it and all contents will be destroyed, in line with Data Protection, after 21 days.

Please follow the one way system displayed in church and heed the instructions given by the ushers, it will feel strange and over regimented not to be able to attend church in the same way as we used to, but all the guidance is in place for everyone's safety.

In order to comply with government advice, and to maintain a safe environment, we ask that you do not stop to chat with friends as you enter or exit church, keep the system flowing smoothly by keeping any important conversations to be held outdoors at a sensible distance from the exit and entrance routes. Thank you

Please remember that everyone is trying their best to enable Mass to be as welcoming, safe, and comfortable for us all. The precautions in place are necessary, and although the environment is not as we would like it to be we just need to accept it until times change, please do not take out your frustrations on the volunteers who are trying to make a difference.

There will be no collection during Mass, the collection plates will be at the back of church near the exit, please put your donations on the plate as you leave church.

At the minute there are no toilet facilities available at church, we apologise for this and are trying to work out how we can re-open them safely.

Thank you for your continued patience.



Donations

Thank you to all those who have continued throughout the pandemic to give so generously to the church. Last Sunday £378.32 was collected after our Masses and more donations were made through bank transfers.

If you would like to continue giving through direct debit, standing order or bank transfer, the details are below.

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
St Wilfrid's
Sort Code 40-34-20
Account Number 01164120

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
St Joseph's
Sort Code 40-34-20
Account Number 31164066

To donate via cheque please make out to
'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead'
These can be posted to the parish address

Please use the reference "Weekly Contribution"

We are continuing to raise money for the improvement of the 'Lourdes Garden' at St Joseph's, so far, we have had £100 donated, if you would like to help please use the reference 'Lourdes Garden'

TRIVIA

We are now nearer to Christmas Day than to the beginning of Lockdown!! Only 132 days to go.

Answers to the Biblical names

1. ARASH = Sarah
2. MINUSCODE = Nicodemus
3. ISONME = Simeon or Simone
4. BEADGONE = Abednego
5. HIPLIP = Philip
6. SOIHEARD = Herodias
7. VILE = Levi
8. BARAHAM = Abraham
9. LEADIN = Daniel
10. MENINJAB = Benjamin

What about these?

1. WANDER
2. I AM HERE
3. LIE
4. HIT GOAL
5. AIR TAME BUS

6. SO AM 7. I MOAN 8. AS MOTH 9. LAME US 10. SO MALE