

St Hilda Partnership – what has happened so far



The Hilda Partnership consists of fifteen communities spread across the towns of Billingham, Hartlepool and Stockton. We have concentrated our efforts on bringing our communities together through prayer and Liturgy in order to begin to build a sense of unity between three very different towns in the deep south east of our diocese.

We began our partnership with 24 hours of prayer in Saint Joseph's Church Norton which was well attended. Subsequently we have begun a series of Pastoral Saint Masses across our area. On Saturday, November 17th we will celebrate the Feast day of Saint Hilda with Mass at Saint Mary's on the Headland, Hartlepool, followed by a procession to the nearby 14th Century church of Saint Hilda for refreshments. At the end of December, we will be organising a Mass to celebrate the Pastoral Feast of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, the Patron Saint of the Billingham group of churches.

Our Ministry Day, which is held every September, was attended by parishioners from across the area and a talk by Kathryn Turner on Pope Francis' exhortation "*Gaudete et Exsultate* - Rejoice and be glad" was very well received. In the run up to the Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool we organised a "*River of Light*" in Saint Joseph's Hartlepool. This was an evening of prayer during which candles filled the centre aisle and the crossing point in front of the sanctuary to create a river of light in the darkened church. The atmosphere created is very special and the church was open from seven pm until midnight to allow for a time of private prayer. Subsequently a group representing the three towns attended the Congress in September.



Another opportunity for bringing communities together was a Ceili held in Billingham. The music was great, the food was excellent, and the atmosphere was warm and welcoming. More events will be planned in the future.

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