

Lack gives the Knack

Sometimes we fail to recognise that the limits of our strength are defined by our level of weakness. An arrogant person is one who refuses to acknowledge the weakness in oneself as something to work on, but rather tries to make his mistakes an acceptable norm to work with. The first step to greatness is to recognize that there are always shortcomings; we know little or nothing and therefore need to know more. When a team loses a star player due to injury or suspension, before a decisive match, it always tends to feel demoralised like an underdog. But something positive can come out of this weakness. Instead of being a shortcoming, it can be a motivation, as this deficiency helps the team identify its weaknesses and bring out the best in the other teammates, who would play to the limits of their strengths to cover up what they lacked and prove they can do it.

Think of matches where the favourites lost and the underdogs won, and you'll see that the difference is always the ability to recognise their weaknesses and make up for them. I remember the 2009 UEFA Champions League final between Manchester United and Barcelona. Man United were defending champions, and so were considered favourites, while Barcelona were underdogs, having lost several star players (defenders) due to suspension and injury. After the final whistle, Barcelona won thanks to their makeshift defence. Why? Because they knew their weakness and made up for them.

The level of our weakness is the limit of our strength.

This Sunday's readings call us to embrace integrity and humility so that we can be considered blessed in the eyes of the Lord. This is because there is strength in humility, and humility in strength. This is why Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, calls on us to be true to ourselves, to shun arrogance, and to embrace humility in order to avoid humiliation. The human race has nothing to boast of, since God uses what is foolish to shame the wise, and what is weak to shame the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). So embrace humility, not humiliation.

Fr Anthony C Ohaekwusi

Our current diocesan situation

(Full text available on the diocesan website)

You who live your faith in what you do from day to day, in your own lives, and what you bring to the lives of your families and communities are bearing witness to a Church not just challenged by the allegations that have been made, but one that is coming out of the pandemic period and one which needs to embrace change, to sustain our Church for the future. I thank you all for the constancy of your support and your honesty in feeding back to us in the coming months, telling us your concerns, your feelings and your thinking on how we can walk better together – the Synodal Way – to improve the life and health of our Church

The cry of the Gospel message is that in darkness we can be the light. In emptiness we can be filled. In our dissatisfaction and confusion, we are stirred to seek God.

It is my privilege to accompany you on this journey. I assure you of my prayers for the diocese but also for you, your families, and friend.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon

Saint Mary, Aycliffe
Saint Thomas, Shildon
All Saints, Ferryhill
Sacred Heart, Chilton
Saint Joseph, Coundon



*All are welcome
in all of our
churches —
no exceptions!*

Fr Anthony Cornforth, 01325 313611, 07923683046

Fr Deni Mary, 01740 651343

Fr Augustine Ofoma 07424715028

Sister Anna Ryan, 01388 602030

anthony.cornforth@gmail.com

www.aycliffeshildoncatholic.com

allsaints.ferryhill@gmail.com

28 / 29 January 2023: Sunday 4A



Our Beatitude

On the mountain Jesus sits down, indicating that he is teaching. He teaches God's way to live as we are created for. His teaching would radically change the world!

Each day many vulnerable groups and campaigns need their voices to be heard and included; many efforts to end corruption need to be supported so that justice may be realised in unjust societies. Jesus calls us to 'happy' attitudes, to being humane, to feel with others, to knowing that we are all creatures of God advocating equality for all. We all yearn for comfort, for nourishment, for peace and justice. We need to have the opportunity to receive love, promote peace, share resources, and give love - love of God, of self, of the other and of creation. Our rejoicing and gladness will be authentic because it is in the Lord, the hope of all. We ought to be journeying together towards heaven our homeland in a spirit of collaboration and openness. **Our Beatitude:** God's blessing, his love and approval for our way of living for which we are happy and joyful.

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	Isabella and William McKeating
28	16.00	Shildon	Pauline Atkinson (RIP)
Jan	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Vincent and Violet McCoy
29	10.00	Aycliffe	Margaret Forrest
Jan	10.30	Ferryhill	Vince Carr
	12.00	Aycliffe	Polish Community Mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Talbie and Breda Duffy

Our Daily Struggles

We're indebted to the Gospel writers who pulled together for us a wealth of information about Jesus and the teaching he has given us. Matthew was writing for a Jewish community of believers and others at a time when Christians, especially teachers, were under serious threat. They could be flogged and forced to flee to other towns to protect themselves.

Matthew is a clever and wonderful writer, his Gospel planned carefully under clear sections. One of these we call the Sermon on the Mount. Today's Gospel passage comes from this collection of Jesus' teachings. This is an instruction manual for the way of life asked of Jesus' followers.

Jesus is the gift of God to us, introducing us to the Kingdom or reign of God - what it's like for us to think like Jesus thinks, to behave as God would have his people behave. The Beatitudes listed in today's Gospel don't make for comfortable reading. They challenge much of accepted practice in the world. We're more than invited to check how much we easily collude with casual values and practice.

God's way is different. Jesus' teaching makes radical demands of us. Being poor in spirit requires that we examine our possessions and how we think of them in a society bombarded by 'must have' advertising. Possessions can easily possess us. We don't need much of what we acquire. Dare we think this one out honestly? Even the ability to mourn is blessed - we must not deny the pain and the loss we experience, which sharpens our priorities. The Lord describes himself as gentle and humble (Matthew 11:29). It's a requirement of style in the way we love. It's far from being soft.

Being passionate about justice is in Jesus' list - it means challenging values and decisions in standing up for what's right. As you and I rely on God's mercy, we're asked in our turn to show mercy - the very life of God. Notice he demands we be peacemakers. He doesn't say peace-keepers (that's different). It's a tough one. Add to that being pure in heart (looking people in the eye and knowing they, like me, are made in God's image and likeness).

Persecution was a daily experience in the early Christian community. Be blessed for not giving in, even things we have to take the flack for. And don't expect the world to speak well of you if you live out these principles. You'll be hurt, misrepresented and harmed by alternative, guarded and defended positions taken by others. Being 'blessed' or 'happy', as today's translation describes it, is a mature and thorough journey beyond comfort. I believe many ordinary Christians make it but would never think of themselves this way.

(Escomb Partnership Note)

Please pray for all the sick

Mary Eales, Eileen Walsh, Mark Hugill, Lynda Whelbourn, Phyllis Musgrave, Terry Cheesmond, Savannah Philips, Claire, Eileen Brownbridge, Paula Cruddace, Pat Copeland, Raymond Lowey, Julie Kirkbride, Helen Hall, Vilna Woolhead, Doris Irwin, John Regan, Elaine McCartney, John Garnham, Frank Morrell, Coulson family, Coleen Ogden, Janet Holmes, Alfie Pennington, Suzanne Winship, Eleanor Goundry, Jamie Spence, Hannibal Gonsalves, Anne Nicholson, Mary Horton, Bernard Molyneux, Lola Rose, Stephen Russ.

This week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	Christine Forster
30	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Jan	10.00	Aycliffe	Ann Lee (A)
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	Private Intention (S & J O)
31	09.45	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
Jan	10.00	Aycliffe	Liam McGreachan
	13.30	Coundon	Exposition and Rosary (also 7pm)
	19.00	Aycliffe	Prayer Group (in the house)
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	No Intention requested
1	09.40	Shildon	Rosary
Feb	10.00	Shildon	Joe, Jenny and Mary Pearce
Thu	09.30	Coundon	Young people of the parish
2	10.00	Aycliffe	Michael Kristensen (RIP)
Feb	19.00	Aycliffe	Exposition (in the house)
Fri	<u>09.30</u>	<u>Coundon</u>	Rena Dove
3	09.30	Aycliffe	Exposition
Feb	10.00	Aycliffe	Mary Allan and family
Sat	09.30	Coundon	Private Intention
4	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
Feb	12.00	Aycliffe	Winnie Barnes (RIP)
	16.00	Shildon	Sid Elliott (RIP)
	18.00	Chilton	No Intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Pat and Anthony Fleming
5	10.00	Aycliffe	Louise Jenyns
Feb	10.30	Ferryhill	Devine and Lamb family
	<u>13.00</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	Polish Community Mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family

Rest in Peace: **Mary Moran**

Next week-end: collection of biscuits, tomatoes, chick peas etc for **refugees**.

Saturday 4 March, 10.30am - 4pm at St Mary's Catholic School, Benton Park Road NE7 7PE: **Fruitfulness for the Kingdom** - a Day with Michelle Moran. Packed Lunch. No Charge. pat.kennedy42@icloud.com or 0191 2841690

St Mary's School: Preparation for baptised children in Year 4 to receive **Reconciliation and Holy Communion** will begin in school on Thursday 2 February, 3.30pm.

If you would like your child/ren to take part in the programme, please contact Mrs Catherine Clausen asap by email at catherineclausen@yahoo.co.uk

Vacancies: **Diocesan Management Accountant** – full-time, permanent, www.diocesehn.org.uk or 0191 243 3301