

If you would like to have a copy of our weekly newsletter delivered direct to your email inbox, please scan the QR code and follow the link.



Saint Mary,	Aycliffe	DL5 4HT
Saint Thomas,	Shildon	DL4 1HP
All Saints,	Ferryhill	DL17 8ET
Sacred Heart,	Chilton	DL17 0PW
Saint Joseph,	Coundon	DL14 8NL



**World day of prayer for vocations:** The Church depends on the generous response of individuals willing to serve God and His people. This weekend we are asked to pray for vocations both globally and within our own diocese.

### Jesus is the true shepherd

The conversation blew up suddenly and became quite a discussion. The trigger that kicked off some energetic participation was Emily talking nostalgically about Benediction and May processions. It lit the fire under Harriett, who thought that would be taking us backwards. No one wanted to cause offence, but we covered a range of loves and disappointments.

The distinction is a touch simplistic, but are we people of the Gospel or people of the institution? Do we sometimes get over-churchy? We are the community of the followers of Jesus. Our Church is here to help us become more like Him, hopefully keeping us constantly sharp in mind and heart to serve our changing world.

Our Gospel passage today is stark. Jesus is our doorkeeper. He doesn't keep us closeted in a comfy sheepfold - he leads us out, feeds us on good pastures, dependent on his leadership and direction. Effectively, he's saying 'beware of imitations'. Changes within Church life should be focused on our spiritual development, loving God and neighbour. Be conscious of the help and the danger of habit. It's why the Gospel constantly challenges us.

Comfort zones can be seductive. We're learners, forever students, and the Master has our best interests at heart. We're followers. Even if we lag behind, he spots it and comes for the strays and stragglers.

We don't delight in being likened to sheep, but we surely acknowledge that we need looking after. The Lord's care for us teaches us in turn how we are to care for one another and for the creation entrusted to us. He has come so that we may have life and have it to the full - it's about love and nothing less. The words and the images are an attempt to pass on to us something of the profound experience of St John the Gospel writer's time spent with Jesus, and we share the benefit of him reflecting on it all. His inspired message should never be taken lightly or read hurriedly. We have the awesome privilege and responsibility of doing Jesus' work. It requires a familiarity with his person, message and style. *Escomb Partnership Note*

Until 29 May. No masses at **St Mary's Cathedral Newcastle** due to maintenance being carried out. Masses will be celebrated in other city centre churches. Details at [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk)

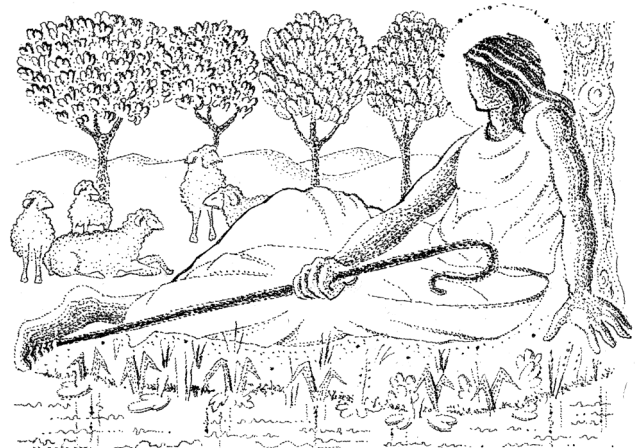
Saturday 9 May. 10am to 3pm at St Mary's Cathedral Newcastle: **Justice & Peace AGM.** Details at [rcdhn.org.uk](http://rcdhn.org.uk)

Saturday 16 May. at 1.20pm at English Martyrs, Newcastle: **A Mass for Pentecost.** Details from the Charismatic Diocesan Service at [charis@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:charis@diocesehn.org.uk)

New Ministers Rota for St Mary's available next week.

*Fr Anthony Cornforth*, 01325 313611, 07923 683046  
*stmary.newtonaycliffe@diocesehn.org.uk*  
*Fr Augustine Ofoma*, 01740 651343  
*allsaints.ferryhill@diocesehn.org.uk*  
*Sister Anna Ryan*, 01388 602030  
*Website: www.aycliffeshildoncatholic.com*

### 25 / 26 April 4th Sunday of Easter (A)



### The Good Shepherd

The image of the Good Shepherd is one of deep reassurance and intimacy. Jesus describes himself not as a distant leader, but as one who *knows* his sheep - personally, attentively, and lovingly. This isn't a vague awareness; it's a relationship built on trust, where the sheep recognize his voice because they have learned it over time.

What stands out most is the Shepherd's willingness to lay down his life. Leadership here is not about power or control, but about self-giving love. It challenges us to rethink how we care for others - whether we lead, support, or simply accompany people in our daily lives. Are we attentive? Do we protect and guide with compassion?

At the same time, there's a quiet invitation: to listen. In a world full of noise, many voices compete for our attention. The Gospel reminds us that not every voice leads to life. Learning to recognize the Shepherd's voice - through prayer, reflection, and conscience - becomes essential. It leaves us with a simple but powerful question: whose voice are we following?

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	<b>Olive Hughes</b>
25	16.00	Shildon	<b>George Wardell (A)</b>
April	18.00	Aycliffe	<b>Polish Language Mass</b>
	18.00	Chilton	<b>No intention requested</b>
Sun	9.00	Coundon	<b>People of the Parish</b>
26	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Hugh James McKeating</b>
April	10.30	Ferryhill	<b>Gerard and Joan Franey</b>
	18.00	Aycliffe	<b>Eleanor Goundry (B)</b>

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

**New to the Parish?**  
Please introduce yourself after  
Mass. Registration Forms are  
located in the church porch.

Sunday 3 May, 10.45am at St Mary's: **African Catholic Community** monthly meeting. Come and join us as we come together to strengthen our faith and community bonds.

Saturday 9 May, 10am at St Mary's: **First Communion Mass.**

Saturday 9 May, 10am - 4pm at Minsteracres: **A Circle of Prayer.** Details at [Minsteracres.org.uk](http://Minsteracres.org.uk)

Wednesday 20 May, 10am - 4pm at Minsteracres: **Day of Consolation** (for those experiencing bereavement). Details at [Minsteracres.org.uk](http://Minsteracres.org.uk)

23 / 24 May: Polish Community **Cake Sale.**

Sunday 19 July: **The bishop** will celebrate mass at St Mary's.

**Mass Intentions:** The priest offers Mass for the good of the Church and for a particular intention. If you would like a Mass to be offered for a specific purpose, perhaps a deceased relative or friend, or someone who is sick, or for your own intention. Please complete your request on one of the envelopes in the church porch and place in the collection basket. If you wish to leave a voluntary donation then please do so.



### A caring ruler

Jesus adopts the ancient tradition of a ruler who cares for the vulnerable, poor and sick, and refines it in His role of the Suffering Servant, the Passover lamb who becomes our guardian and guide.

It is easy to lose sight of Jesus. We need to be

aware of impostors travelling with us through life who cause harm and sow discontent. Dictators, or powerful and influential people, can occupy that place in our lives where Jesus should be. But also our minds can be preoccupied by resentments, hostility or other unhelpful thoughts, some seeming to take root and grow without our awareness; negative sentiments towards others; jealousies and intolerances, inhabiting our inner being, leaving behind us a trail of soured memories and damaged relationships.

If we listen to the call of our True Shepherd, capable of making His home in us, He will protect, restore and heal us, bringing us back to life, an everlasting life in Jesus.

### Please pray for all the sick

Christine Bainbridge, Julie Kirkbride, Vilna Woolhead, Hannibal Gonsalves, Bernard Molyneux, Joan Neasham, Mary Horton, Chris Palmer, Sharon Pape, Maureen Palmer, Jamie Spence, Tom Brett, George Walton, Carla Middleton, Raymond Lowey, Maria Hewitt, Peter Rogan, Mary Nichol, Rita Farthing, Helen Dungey, Caroline Lambie, Isobel Shaw.

*(Please let us know of any changes)*

## Services this week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	<b>Barry Fawcett</b>
27	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Apr	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>John McQuillan</b>
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	<b>A sick child (LL)</b>
28	09.50	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
Apr	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Maureen Palmer (in hospital)</b>
	19.00	Coundon	Exposition
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	<b>For a successful operation</b>
29	09.40	Shildon	Rosary
Apr	10.00	Shildon	<b>George Walton (Successful Surgery)</b>
Thu	09.30	Coundon	<b>Gerard Fleming</b>
30	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Margaret Lee (Fowler Road)</b>
Fri	09.15	Chilton	<b>Intention not requested</b>
1	09.30	Aycliffe	Exposition
May	<u>10.00</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	<u>Communion Service</u>
<b>Next week-end</b>			
Sat	09.30	Coundon	<b>John Wigley</b>
2	12.00	Aycliffe	<b>Ena (A) and George Cornforth</b>
May	16.00	Shildon	<b>Peggy and Anthony Martindale</b>
	18.00	Chilton	<b>Intention not requested</b>
Sun	9.00	Coundon	<b>People of the Parish</b>
3	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Mick Allen (A)</b>
May	10.30	Ferryhill	<b>John Jackson</b>
	18.00	Aycliffe	<b>Celia Walker (RIP)</b>

Rest in Peace: **Carol Ann Bainbridge (March), Christine Barron.**

Ferryhill and Chilton: Please return **red mission boxes** next week to be emptied.

St Mary's Sanctuary Candle this week: **Mary & Walter Rutter**

Sunday, 9.45am at St Mary's: **Choir practice.** All welcome.

Children's Newsletter: Please take one home with you from St Mary's porch and encourage your children to read it.

Sunday, 10am at St Mary's: Welcome Samuel Ireton from **Safe Families**, which provides support to families and care givers, helping prevent family breakdown and children entering care. More information at [safefamilies.uk](http://safefamilies.uk)

27 April - 8 May: **Aycliffe Senior Citizens Excursions.**

Contact 01325 300700 or [www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk](http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk)

Tuesday 28 April, 1pm to 3pm in St Mary's Meeting Room:

(and every Tuesday): **Social Group** get together - all welcome! Anyone willing to bring / donate table top games, please bring on Tuesday. Tea, coffee and cake provided.

Thursday: **Feast of St Catherine of Siena** (Patron of Europe).