

Saturday 15 March, 10 am - 2 pm at Chilton Catholic Club:
Jumble Sale, to raise funds towards the installation of solar panels on the roof. Everyone welcome. Bar open at 11 am; tea and coffee served.

Sunday 16 March, 5pm at St Mary's: **Church music** practice for anyone who would like to come along and sing.

CAFOD Big Lent Walk. Walk 200km over 40 days during Lent. Sign up at <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

Wednesday 19 March, 12 noon at St Thomas, Shildon: Ecumenical **Lenten Lunch**. All welcome

Thursday 20 March, 12.30pm at Ushaw College: **St Cuthbert's Day mass**. All welcome.

Saturday 29 March, 7pm at the Little Sisters of the Poor, NE4 7QA: **Ceilidh**. Tickets £10. 0191 2731279.

Wednesday 2 April, 7pm at St Mary's: parish meeting for St Mary's and St Thomas' to look at our arrangements for the future and, hopefully, to set up a **parish council**.

Sunday 13 April, 3-5pm at St Mary's church: Music concert with **Sophia Strings**.

Wednesday 16 April, 11am at St Mary's Cathedral in Newcastle: **Chrism mass**.

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!

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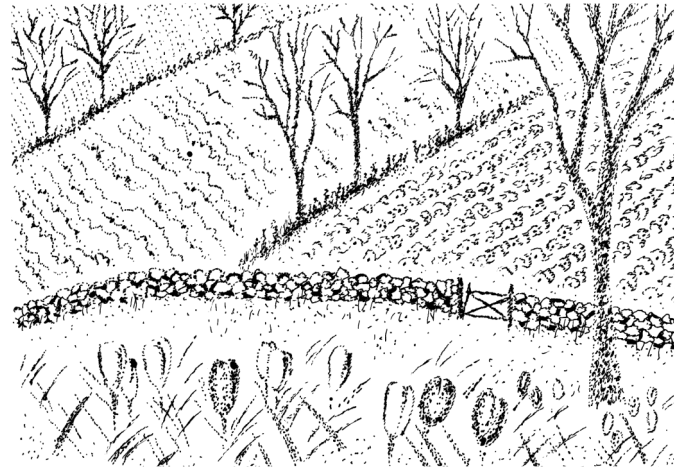
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8 / 9 March 2025: Lent 1c



What will Lent bring?

We've just begun Lent – a time to do some serious basic thinking. In today's reading Jesus is dealing with the 'what ifs' and their consequences. In carefully chosen picture language, the options are dismissed as contorted thinking, seriously at odds with the Father's Kingdom. 'Forty days' is Scripture-speak for 'Watch this space – something important is happening'. He's fasting. In contrast, food becomes very important. Doing without ordinary food highlights what really sustains - every word that comes from the mouth of God. Later he'll feed 5000 people and introduce them to being fed with his own body and blood. He has to sort out how he comes across to people, how he teaches, how he influences, how he engages, how he confronts - in short, how he uses power. Use of power can be a heady trip and we see it on front page news. Jesus pushes against buying fame and opts instead for service. The temptation to test God with attention-seeking and captivating spectacles is another distraction to be replaced by meals with tax collectors and sinners, with the sick and the grieving and the distress of poverty in all its forms. Choosing that against the glare of promotion and privilege is the hallmark of the genuine life-changing power of love.

This time of Lent is an opportunity.

Think again how relevant is your chosen penance?

We cannot forever run away from God or fool ourselves with decisions lacking scrutiny about their motivation and helpfulness. It's time for sitting with Jesus in the desert and thinking again. Lent can be uncomfortable but can teach us to pray. Our prayers may well be different, our outlook and practice may change. When Christians and others come together, Jesus joins us. Give him space, and don't restrict the agenda. Our Forty Days may bring something quite new.

Escomb Partnership Note

Spring

Spring brings light, new life and hope, an opportunity to re-view our priorities and the contents of our hearts, a period for adjustment and realignment with God. It is easy to be charmed by our own creations, aptitudes and achievements, then claiming them as our own, but is anything obtained without the free and unmerited favour shown to us by our Father? Over time the simplicity of the Word's call can be concealed by our complicated lives and self-will. Observances in Lent with self-questioning can help us to uncover more about God, his commandments, his will and generosity, and gain knowledge of our own weaknesses, temptations and sin. By fasting or making the extra offering we enter into solidarity with Jesus and the hardships of his passion. When we are tested and things get tough, are we willing to risk all for the Gospel? If we rely on God's Word, we are unshakably safe, for God has created and arranged everything.

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	Paula Cruddace (A)
8	16.00	Shildon	Margery Harrop
Mar	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	People of the parish
9	10.00	Aycliffe	Eleanor Goundry
Mar	10.30	Ferryhill	Fr Ronnie Richmond
	12.30	Aycliffe	Polish Language mass
	<u>15.00</u>	<u>Ferryhill</u>	Stations of the Cross
	<u>16.00</u>	<u>Chilton</u>	Stations of the Cross
	18.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family

Don't let your EGO get in the way

Lent can rightly be called a sober and spiritual period. It is a time of retreat and reflection to recharge our spiritual batteries and properly prepare for our faith journey through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lent reflects the forty-day experience of Jesus, who fasted and prayed in preparation for his public ministry. It reminds us that planning and preparation should be a prayerful experience. As we plan and prepare, we also pray, because prayer gives power to our plans and makes us see the place of providence in the human experience. Since Jesus began his ministry with prayer, why shouldn't we place our plans and undertakings in God's hands in prayer?

Our readings remind us that prayer is a powerful expression of the faith from our heart and lips. This is because by believing in our heart we are made righteous, but by confessing it with our mouth we are saved. Prayer gives us a foothold that allows us to take power into our own hands, but this power does not make us immune to temptation. Even the Son of God could not avoid the temptation that comes when we feel ready to take a big step in life. If we decide to go on a diet to improve our health, the desire to eat sweets becomes most intense. If we are determined to go to the gym to stay in shape, laziness gets in the way. If we resolve to do salutary deeds, the desire to do the opposite comes with greater pressure.

The temptation of Jesus reveals the nature of every temptation we face in life. Temptations come in the form of hunger, strife or challenge. They push our egos to react in ways we would not normally react. This puts the EGO at the centre of our decisions, which can be summarized with three letters:

E = everyone does it

G = God will understand

O = One more time.

But Jesus showed us the way out, reminding us that temptations will come, but those who trust in God will not be put to shame when they take them to God in prayer. For we do not live by bread alone, but by the word of God that saves.

Fr Anthony C Ohaekwusi

This week-end at St Mary's: **Raffle** of chocolates, wine etc. to boost the Diamond Wedding (John and Ellen Tatum) gift to children's football teams in Kenya and Zambia. Winning numbers drawn at 11am on Sunday. Also, on Sunday 23 March, 2-4pm at St Mary's: **Afternoon Tea**. Bring your own proscoc (or proper wine if you are more discerning!)

Please pray for all the sick

Mark Hugill, Lynda Whelbourn, Doris Irwin, Daran Butterfield, Terry Cheesmond, Christine Bainbridge, Francene Kaye, Benjamin, Rita Neasham, Raymond Lowey, Rose Hankey, Julie Kirkbride, Vilna Woolhead, Frank & Joan Billingham, Alaine McCartney, John Garnham, Mary Horton, Lola Rose, Frank Morrell, Coulson family, Coleen Ogden, Janet Holmes, Alfie Pennington, Suzanne Winship, Hannibal Gonsalves, Jamie Spence, Anne Nicholson, Bernard Molyneux, Heather Belcher, Stephen Russ, Marie Nichol, Rose, Frances Bainbridge, Victoria Hart, Peter Hull, Sharon Pape, Matthew Pape.

Masses this week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	Clare Bowes
10	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Mar	10.00	Aycliffe	Gerard, Winifred and Bede Maley
	11.00	Aycliffe	Requiem mass Michael Randall.
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	Geraldine Donnelly
11	09.45	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
Mar	10.00	Aycliffe	Ruth Roach (Palmer)
	13.00	Coundon	Exposition (also 7pm)
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	No intention requested
12	09.30	Shildon	Stations of the Cross
Mar	10.00	Shildon	Christie McCormack
Thu	09.30	Coundon	Pat and Anthony Fleming
	<u>11.00</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	Stations of the Cross
13	<u>11.30</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	In Thanksgiving
Fri	09.15	Chilton	No intention requested followed by Stations of the Cross
14	09.30	Aycliffe	Exposition
Mar	10.00	Aycliffe	Terry Northcott
Sat	09.30	Coundon	Joan and Frank Billingham
15	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
Mar	12.00	Aycliffe	John and Kitty Collins
	16.00	Shildon	Johnny and Marion Francis
	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	People of the Parish
16	10.00	Aycliffe	Brian Palmer (RIP)
Mar	10.30	Ferryhill	Michael, Katherine and Sister Vincent Franey
	12.30	Aycliffe	Polish Language mass
	<u>15.00</u>	<u>Ferryhill</u>	Stations of the Cross
	<u>16.00</u>	<u>Chilton</u>	Stations of the Cross
	18.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family

This week-end: collection of biscuits for **Refugee Centre.**

Tuesday, 10.45am onwards in St Mary's Church Hall: **Lenten lunch** (organized by St Mary's school). All welcome.

Tuesday, 11am: the **car park at St Mary's** will be used by Durham Community Action. Stewards until 3pm.

Tuesday, 2.20pm and 7.30pm, Holy Name, Jesmond: Newman Association talk by Tony Flannery on **The Bible, history or myth? Why it is important to know.**

Wednesday, 12 noon at St John's, Shildon: **Lenten Lunch.**

Friday: **CADOD Family Fast Day.**

Friday, 7pm at St Mary's: **Journey of Faith** meeting.