

God is Real - Are We?

When love is real, it manifests itself in everything you do. You can't love what I offer and hate me at the same time. Of course, we see this in many relationships where someone enjoys the benefits, but hates the benefactor. The same thing happens when someone says they love freedom and democracy, but joins extremists like ISIS to fight against their own democratic country; when we preach freedom of worship, but hate religion; when we give alms and aid to the less fortunate, not to improve their situation, but to make us feel greater than they are; when a child tells their parents: "I hate you", yet loves to use their insurance and credit cards. Our words are not true until they are reflected in our actions.

An atheist wanted his child to go to a Catholic school to get a good education because of the low standard in state schools. He gave him a Catholic name and instructed him to get the education and not be Catholic. But during the entrance exam, the only question on the paper was: "Say I believe in God (the Apostle's Creed)". The boy wrote nothing and failed the exam. The examiner was curious why he didn't write anything. And when she asked him why he didn't pass, he replied: "I don't believe in God." Then the examiner told him: "You can only be admitted to the school if you pass the exams."

Many times we portray ourselves as people who love and trust God, while in reality we use God when it is convenient and beneficial for us. The disciples were curious about whether Saul was real or fake. They couldn't believe that he had become one of them until they saw him preaching the gospel at the risk of his own life. Only then did they rise up to save his life. Whenever we sincerely express that we are in God, He comes all out for us in our situations. If we give Him all of ourselves, He will give us all of Himself. Like a branch of the vine, we will flourish if we remain in Him. For He is the whole vine, and we are His branches. He is important to us, just as we are important to Him. So let our confession not be just words, like taking a Catholic name, we must show it in our actions. Faith is not a partial commitment for convenience; it is a total offering of oneself to God's providence. You cannot say you are a Christian if you do not reflect Christ in your life. For if you cut off the word CHRIST from CHRIST-IAN, you are left with IAN, which says: I AM NOTHING.

Anthony O'Haekwusi

North East Catholic History Society: see the diocesan website, or email margaret@coopuk.com

Gift aiding donations (if you are a tax payer) will increase your donation at no extra cost to yourself, as we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated by standing order or envelope.

Diocesan Vacancy: IT Field Engineer. Full-time, 9-month fixed term contract. www.diocesehn.org.uk

HOLY ISLAND SVP VINNIES CAMP, Years 5-7 (inclusive). Fully inclusive for £150. This is a camping experience (8 bed dormitories) for boys and girls in the last 2 years of primary school or first year of Secondary School, organised by the St Vincent de Paul Society. Thousands of children have benefited from this activity filled experience over the past 70 years. Help is available for those who cannot afford the full cost. svp.org.uk/microsite/holy-island

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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27 / 28 April 2024: Easter 5B



All creation is integral to God's vineyard and Christ, as its life-giving source, reaches out to all – maybe not as dramatically as to Paul on the road to Damascus. Barnabas, the 'son of encouragement' supported Paul through the understandable suspicion and fear from the disciples.

Nourished with life-giving Spirit, Paul *spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord*, embodying a new way of living in radical commitment to preaching the Good News. Through Paul and Barnabas, the branches of believers spread wide!

Looking at a grapevine, you can't tell the exact place where the vine ends and the branches begin, both are part of one living plant, just as we are one with Christ in the life of God. Intertwined, the branches symbolise that we are one with each other - tangled up together, living interdependent lives, growing into, around, and out of each other. A life that's deeply rooted messy, crowded, tangled yet fertile.

To bear sweet, healthy, life-sustaining, abundant fruit we need to allow ourselves to stay attached, drawing from the rich, organic soil of God's grace. The Divine Gardener tends our growth as the Spirit of Life runs through our veins.

Forever grafted onto the vine of grace, tangled up with others, connected in Spirit, we can live an interdependent life, rooted and grounded so that God's love will flow through to bear the sweetest, most abundant fruit.

Sat	09.30	Coundon	Pat and John Bailey
27	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
Apr	12.00	Aycliffe	Ena (A) and George Cornforth
	16.00	Shildon	George Wardell
	<u>18.00</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	Polish language mass
	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Jenny Leedale and John Collins
28	10.00	Aycliffe	Lynch & Baird families (deceased)
Apr	10.30	Ferryhill	Chris and Paula Hutchinson
	18.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family

Next week-end: CAFOD retiring collection for the children of **Sudan**. Over 600,000 children are estimated to be severely malnourished. Life-saving treatment and other health services are now being disrupted. The routine immunisation rate has fallen rapidly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with one in six children completely unprotected. All schools have closed, depriving children of a sense of normality and safety, as well as worsening the existing learning crisis.

Saturday 11 May, 10am at St Mary's: **First Communion** (for children at St Joseph's school).

Saturday 11 May, 1pm at the Cathedral, Clayton Street, Newcastle: **Pentecost Mass** (renewed in the Holy Spirit).

Wednesday 15 May, 7pm at St Mary's, Newton Aycliffe: Parish **Open Meeting** to discuss the future organisation of St Mary's and St Thomas'. *There will not be any big announcement*, just an opportunity to discuss how we can move forwards with confidence over the next 5 years. There will be big changes in this period throughout the Diocese (no details as yet), in particular a severe reduction in the number of priests.

Friday 17 May, 6pm at St Mary's: Celebration of a **Latin Mass** followed by a brief introduction to understanding Latin in the liturgy, primarily for those with no prior knowledge of the Latin language, but open to anyone to attend.

Saturday 18 May, 10am at St Mary's: **First Communion** (for children at St Mary's school).

Friday 24 May (schools) and 25-26 May (churches): Pope Francis' FIRST EVER **World Day for Children**.

Saturday 1 June, 12 noon to 4pm at 2 Upsall Drive, Darlington: Kumi Community Foundation (Uganda) **Open Day**. www.kumicommunityfoundation.co.uk 01325 465469

Sunday 2 June, 3pm at Ushaw: **Eucharistic Procession** with Adoration. <https://ushaw.org/whats-on-at-ushaw/>

Sunday 8 June, 10-30am—4pm at Ushaw: Workshop on the **Synod on Synodality** means for us. Packed lunch, or food available to buy. <https://ushaw.org/whats-on-at-ushaw/>

Sunday 23 June: Escorted **Tour of Dublin**, Ireland and the South East, flying from Newcastle. Contact Patricia: knockpilgrimages@gmail.com 01268 762 278

Saturday 29 June, 10am onwards at the Youth Village: **Significance Festival**. Email Nicole at nsalkeld@ymt.org

Please pray for all the sick

Mark Hugill, Lynda Whelbourn, Phyllis Musgrave, Doris Irwin, Terry Cheesmond, Savannah Philips, Christine Bainbridge Eileen Brownbridge, Claire, Benjamin, Rita Neasham. Raymond Lowey, Julie Kirkbride, Vilna Woolhead, John Regan, Elaine McCartney, John Garnham, Mary Horton, Frank Morrell, Coulson family, Coleen Ogden, Janet Holmes, Alfie Pennington, Suzanne Winship, Hannibal Gonsalves, Eleanor Goundry, Jamie Spence, Lola Rose, Anne Nicholson, Bernard Molyneux, Heather Belcher, Stephen Russ, Doreen Hennessey, Marie Nichol, Frances Bainbridge, Frank & Joan Billingham, Matthew Pape, Sharon Pape, Nadine O'Sullivan, Liz Johnson.

Masses this week

Mon 29 pr	09.30	Coundon	Frank Plunkett
	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
	10.00	Aycliffe	A sick person (M)
Tue 30	09.15	Ferryhill	No intention requested
	09.50	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
	10.00	Aycliffe	Herbert and Stella Swinburne
	13.00	Coundon	Exposition (also 7pm)
Wed 1 May	09.15	Ferryhill	John Jackson
	<u>09.30</u>	<u>Shildon</u>	<u>Exposition (Peace)</u>
	10.00	Shildon	May Hutchinson
Thu 2 May	09.30	Coundon	Nora, Ian and Al Moore
	10.00	Aycliffe	Special Intention (M&K)
	19.00	Aycliffe	Exposition (in the house)
Fri 3 May	09.15	Chilton	Wendy Wigley
	09.30	Aycliffe	Exposition
	10.00	Aycliffe	Fr Philip Carroll (LD)
Sat 4 May	09.30	Coundon	Cornelius, Kathleen, Tony Mattimoe
	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
	12.00	Aycliffe	Stephen McKenna
	16.00	Shildon	John Watson Harrop
Sun 5 May	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
	09.00	Coundon	John Wigley
	10.00	Aycliffe	Paula Cruddace (RIP)
	10.30	Ferryhill	Devine and Lamb family
	<u>13.00</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	Polish language mass
18.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family	

Tuesday, 12.05pm at the Cathedral: **Mass** in support of the Victims and Survivors of Abuse.

Saturday 4 May, 11.30am at Holy Name, Jesmond, NE2 3JX: Public Lecture by Professor Eamon Duffy: Robert Hugh Monsignor Benson and the End of the World.

Saturday 4 May, General Election, cafod.org.uk/encounter: Online session to learn more about *A Year of Encounter*, a joint initiative between CAFOD and the SVP, helping us ask key questions of local candidates.

Sunday: International Day of Prayer for **Eastern Christians**.

Sunday, 4pm at Ushaw: **Sung Vespers** (Evening Prayer). All welcome. No ticket required.

9 month Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Now more than ever in these dark and terrible times we must fly to the protection of Our Lady, praying for the whole world. The Novena prayer is on YouTube: **Cardinal Burke 9 month Novena**.