

## The Fans of Jesus Christ

We know and follow celebrities for what we like and admire about them. Being a celebrity is amazing and interesting, especially in the age of social media. Celebrities are admired, liked, respected and followed as leaders. They are popular models whose actions and lifestyles influence the popular culture of society. Many desire to be like them, just as many compete for their attention and approval. All this puts them in a delicate and vulnerable position. While they are given great respect and reverence, much more is expected of them. They have to maintain a high level of reputation because they can fall into oblivion at any moment. One moment they can be the most beloved angel and the next the most hated devil. Think of Will Smith before and after his infamous slap at the Oscars in 2022. Celebrities' lives are short not because their role is short, but because their position depends on the approval of many strangers who make them feel respected or despised. A football star is considered a star and a team favourite one minute and is considered a flop and irrelevant by the same fans the next. In this life, one can quickly go from fame to shame, from grace to disgrace, from hero to zero, from awesome to awful, from terrific to terrible.

The Palm Sunday Gospels put Jesus in a somewhat similar situation. Like any celebrity, he was cheered and revered during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but during his passion he was ridiculed and condemned. In one case he was a star admired by the crowd, and in another he became a gangster who was crucified. These people were fans, the crowd who followed His popularity, not disciples who followed His ministry. They were fair-weather friends who exalted and condemned when it suited them. The Passion of Jesus shows **three kinds of fans**:

1. Those who cheer like the crowd but are quick to condemn because they don't really know Him and don't care about Him;
2. Those who care about Him and defend Him, like Peter, but fear Him and disown Him when things get tough;
3. Sycophants, like Judas, who don't like Him but still grovel to Him to bring Him down with a kiss Him.

But Jesus, through his passion, has taught us that God is looking for disciples, not fans. He showed us that a disciple is someone who remains humble in good times and faithful in difficult times. Such a person will never be ashamed of insults when trials come, and will be exalted by God above every name. For we are not called to be served but to serve, not to be famous but to be faithful.

*Fr Anthony C Ohaekwusi*

Wednesday 23 April, 7pm at St Mary's church: Music concert with **Sophia Strings**. Please note change of date and time. Tickets available from [sophiastrings.com](http://sophiastrings.com)

Monday 28 April, 12.30pm at St Mary's:

Requiem mass for **Mary Rutter**.

Monday 12 - 18 May: **Mental Health Awareness Week**

Planning to visit Westminster Abbey? We have a **free pass** for up to 4 people. Available from St Mary's.

Saint Mary,  
Saint Thomas,  
All Saints,  
Sacred Heart,  
Saint Joseph,

Aycliffe  
Shildon  
Ferryhill  
Chilton  
Coundon



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

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**12 / 13 April 2025: Palm Sunday**



## Hosanna! Joyful praise, hopes and prayer

Jesus enters the Holy City. As he climbed from the lowlands of Galilee to Jerusalem's gate we joined him because he called us. We asked for healing to see and hear him more clearly, for good listeners make disciples and he gave us faith to follow him. If we let him, he makes his home in us, taking us with him in his ascent to the Cross, Resurrection and into his Kingdom.

Jesus teaches how important it is to become child-like in order to become citizens of his new realm; to be diminished like him, doing nothing for his own gain but totally for the Father, willing to empty himself, even reaching the lowest level.

Silence is the highest form of prayer we can give, offering ourselves up to God in sunshine and rain, in times of crisis and in every day life, increasing our engagement with him continuously during Easter and beyond.

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	<b>John Embleton (A)</b>
12	16.00	Shildon	<b>Peter and Julia Gabriele</b> (Wedding anniversary)
Apr	18.00	Chilton	<b>Mary Moran</b>
Sun	09.00	Coundon	<b>People of the parish</b>
13	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>John Green</b>
Apr	10.30	Ferryhill	<b>John Robinson (recently deceased)</b>
	11.45	Ferryhill	<b>Baptism</b>
	12.30	Aycliffe	<b>Polish language mass</b>
	18.00	Aycliffe	<b>Our parish family</b>

## Holy Week

Monday 14 April, 6pm at All Saints: Penitential Service.

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

Wednesday 16 April, 11.30am at Wear Valley: cremation service for John Clifford Peaker.

Thursday 17 April: 4pm St Thomas, 5pm All Saints,  
7pm St Mary, 7pm St Joseph.

Friday 18 April: 10am St Mary, 10.30am Sacred Heart: **Stations**  
1pm St Joseph, 1pm, St Thomas  
3pm All Saints 3pm, St Mary

Saturday 19 April: 12 noon St Mary, 4pm St Thomas,  
5pm All Saints, 7pm St Joseph,  
8pm St Mary

Sunday 20 April: 9am St Joseph 9am St Thomas  
10am St Mary 10.30am Sacred Heart  
6pm St Mary

This week-end: retiring collection for CAFOD **Myanmar** appeal. Cafod envelopes available at the back of church for **Gift Aid** donations.

Rest in Peace: **John Clifford Peaker, Mary Rutter.**

St Mary's: Please see list in church porch for Ministers to "sign up" for **Holy Week ministry** duties

St Mary's: As we come to the end of our **Lent lunches** for another year, a huge thank you to our two wonderful cooks who do such a sterling job.

Offertory envelopes available from St Mary's and St Thomas'.

E-mail newsletters: As we now have new e-mail addresses, we would like to try once again to establish an **email communication** with as many people as possible, including sending newsletters electronically, which will save on costs. If you would like to keep in regular contact with St Mary's or St Thomas', please send an email entitled "E-mail connection" to [stmary.newtonaycliffe@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:stmary.newtonaycliffe@diocesehn.org.uk) We will invite parishioners from the other parishes in the coming weeks.

Vacancies: **St Mary's school Chef Manager.**

<https://bhcet.org.uk/job-vacancies>.

**Diocesan Head of Human Resources.**

**Chief Executive Officer of the Youth Ministry Trust.**

[www.diocesehn.org.uk/job-vacancies](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk/job-vacancies) or 0191 243 3301.

## 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, Sharon Pape, Matthew Pape, Olwen Henshall.

## Masses this week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	<b>Billy and Mary Price</b>
14	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Apr	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Chris and Maureen Palmer &amp; family</b>
	<u>18.30</u>	<u>Aycliffe</u>	<u>Confession (Polish)</u>
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	<b>Private Intention</b>
15	09.45	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
Apr	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>George and Margaret Lee</b> (Wedding anniversary)
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	<b>No intention requested</b>
16	09.30	Shildon	Stations of the Cross
Apr	10.00	Shildon	<b>Christie McCormack</b>

## Holy Thursday

Thu	16.00	Shildon	<b>Sister Aelred (RIP)</b>
17	17.00	Ferryhill	<b>Tom Bell</b>
Apr	19.00	Aycliffe	<b>Mary (A) and Tommy Kennedy</b>
	19.00	Coundon	<b>People of the parish</b>

## Good Friday

Fri	10.00	Aycliffe	Stations of the Cross
18	10.30	Chilton	Stations of the Cross
Apr	13.00	Shildon	Passion Service
	13.00	Coundon	Passion Service
	15.00	Aycliffe	Passion Service
	15.00	Ferryhill	Passion Service

## Holy Saturday

Sat	08.00	Aycliffe	Blessing of baskets (Polish)
30	12.00	Aycliffe	<b>Stephen McKenna (sick)</b>
Mar	16.00	Shildon	<b>John Watson and Margery Harrop</b>
	<u>17.00</u>	Ferryhill	<b>Chris and Paula Hutchinson</b>
	<u>19.00</u>	Coundon	<b>People of the parish</b>
	<u>20.00</u>	Aycliffe	<b>Special Intention (JPB)</b>

## Easter Sunday

Sun	07.30	Aycliffe	<b>Polish Language Mass</b>
31	09.00	Coundon	<b>People of the parish</b>
Mar	09.00	Shildon	<b>John and Mary Brett</b>
	10.00	Aycliffe	<b>Monthu David Vaz</b>
	<u>10.30</u>	<u>Chilton</u>	<b>Joseph O'Connor</b>
	18.00	Aycliffe	<b>Angela and Helen Lloyd</b>