

Epiphany: Have you seen the light?

The Feast of Epiphany celebrates God's manifestation of Himself in Jesus Christ to the world. It points to the revelation of Jesus as the light of the world that dispels every darkness of error. In Epiphany we celebrate how the good news of our salvation was spread and received. The story of the three Kings (also known as Wise men) following the reflection of God's star that led them to meet and pay homage to the new born king reveals that the message of salvation comes to us like a light that enlightens those who receive it. The star is a special symbol for the Christmas season. Its shining light reveals how God led these curious Magi on their voyage of discovery to embrace the mystery of salvation. Our knowledge of God and faith in Him can be likened to a light that dispels all darkness from our lives and enables us to see, understand, and appreciate the mysteries of his glorious will.

With all wisdom and understanding God has made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ. (Ephesians 1:9).

Light is a very important element which enables us to see. Without light, we are as good as blind men. Little wonder light is the first thing God created. Living in darkness is often depressing. When we experience a power cut at night, we are quick to find an alternative supply for light before other things, in order to see. In baptism, the candidate receives the light of Christ and is advised to keep this light burning brightly in order to walk always as a child of light and keep the flame of faith alive in their heart.

But how can you keep the light burning when you cannot see? Like in the story of a blind man who attended a friend's birthday and partied till it was late. When he was leaving, His friend gave him a lamp so that people would see the light and not run into him. As he walked home, someone bumped into him and he fell and shouted. "are you blind, didn't you see the light?" and the young man replied, "sorry sir, the light in your lamp is out." Oftentimes, the light of faith has been given to us, but we stumble because we fail to notice when it is out. The readings this Sunday emphasise that God has made Himself available to everyone. He has given us the light of faith through the Good News we have received. But when we saw his light, how did we handle it? Are we like Herod who was ignorant of this Good News, and blinded by pride, hate and prestige when he received it, and so become an enemy of the light? Are we like the Chief priests and the Scribes who had knowledge of this Good News but never cared to explore and embrace it? They too failed. Or are we like the wise men who saw his light, followed His star, discovered the King, and paid Him homage?

Fr Anthony C Ohaekwusi

First Communion 2025: Year 4 or above, not at a Catholic school? Please send name, address and phone number to Anthony.cornforth@gmail.com

Castlerigg Manor is a retreat centre at Keswick in the Lake District. January offer: 2 nights for £60 per person. Adrienne: business@castleriggmanor.co.uk

Saturday 8 February, 12 noon at the Cathedral, Newcastle: Mass in celebration of **Marriage and Family Life.**

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!

Fr Anthony Cornforth, 01325 313611, 07923683046

Fr Augustine Ofoma 01740 651343

Sister Anna Ryan, 01388 602030

anthony.cornforth@gmail.com

www.aycliffeshildoncatholic.com

allsaints.ferryhill@gmail.com

3 / 4 January 2025: Epiphany C



These travellers are very skilful in philosophy, astronomy and religious matters, but more than this they show wisdom in their understanding of the significance of the birth of Jesus, and find a way to him, valuing him above their own prestige and status, laying all they have at his feet. They cast themselves down before him and honour him as king and divine son, and with myrrh they point to his passion. Church traditions have developed over time, but whether we talk about wise men or kings, from the East, from Asia, Africa or from the West, *they represent the religious moving towards Christ, in whose kingdom there are no distinctions of race or origin. In and through him humanity is united.*

What skills and gifts can we place before Jesus?

Sat	09.30	Coundon	John and Kitty Collins
4	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
Jan	12.00	Aycliffe	Kevin McGowan (A)
	16.00	Shildon	Our parish family
	18.00	Chilton	No intention requested
Sun	09.00	Coundon	David Barron
5	10.00	Aycliffe	John Regan (RIP)
Jan	10.30	Ferryhill	Kathleen Bowtell
	<u>11.00</u>	<u>Baptism</u>	Gabriel Leonard Holt
	12.30	Aycliffe	Polish Language mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Joanne Prior

The Wise search for Jesus in their lives

Ever thought lots of people seem to be searching for meaningful relationships, stable values and a life that has some secure attachment?

Today we celebrate three visitors whose informed searching led them to the anointed Son of God who came to “gather into unity the scattered children of God”. We call them wise men or even kings. They demonstrate a developed sense of great respect - ‘homage’ is the word used by the Scripture story. These visitors represent us. This is the rest of the world coming to Jesus. They’re not daft. They recognise his importance. They’re ready to seek honest direction from others, they’re savvy enough to see through Herod and they bring gifts to show their appreciation of the Lord.

It’s easy to leave this tale as history, to enjoy the arrival of extra figures in the crib. How many Christmas cards find it easier to show these three, usually on camels, than to show Jesus, the whole point and focus of these travellers’ journeys? If we’re not careful we can miss the message - cards often do.

Who has the pulling-power to draw you to travel long distances by arduous means, inquiring as you go until you find what you’re looking for? What challenge do you see in their endurance in order to come and worship the God who enters our world as a helpless baby? Their vision is heroic if seen from their arrival in Bethlehem, foolhardy if looked at from their starting point.

How far would you travel to worship the Lord? In fact for us it’s easy, but requires decisions, time and effort. Being there, not even needing to say anything is important but can be uncomfortable. The temptation is to fill silence with words rather than gaze at the One sent by God.

How often do you give worship and praise rather than just asking for help? Answer the question if you would. We call these three visitors ‘wise’. Wise people still worship him.

Escomb Partnership Note

A message from Zambia (a 19 year old who helped to distribute chickens): I first want to thank the Lord for giving us people like you. Secondly, I’m really thankful for being there for the people of Zambia, and my family is grateful and thank you for our Christmas gift; the chicken was delicious. *Paul Mwila*

Saturday 15 March 2025. Flame 25. Year 9 to University / young adult age. £45 per person (includes return rail, ticket and London travel card). Contact mary.hughes@ymt.org

Please pray for all the sick

Mark Hugill, Lynda Whelbourn, Phyllis Musgrave, Doris Irwin, 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, 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, Claire, Marie Nichol, Frances Bainbridge, Daran Butterfield

Masses this week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	Private Intention (PK)
6	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Jan	10.00	Aycliffe	Catherine McKeating and James Burns
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	Helen Villis (Recently deceased)
7	09.50	Aycliffe	Divine Mercy
Jan	10.00	Aycliffe	Brendan and Matthew families
	13.00	Coundon	Exposition (also 7pm)
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	Nadine O’Sullivan
8	09.40	Shildon	Rosary
Jan	10.00	Shildon	Eileen Walsh
Thu	09.30	Coundon	Pat and Anthony Fleming
9	10.00	Aycliffe	Mia, Dean and Alexis Walsh
Fri	09.15	Chilton	No intention requested
10	09.30	Aycliffe	Exposition
Jan	10.00	Aycliffe	John Regan (RIP)

Sat	09.30	Coundon	Margaret and Martin Brown
12	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and Confession
Jan	12.00	Aycliffe	Anna and Colette McCourt
	16.00	Shildon	Helen (A) and Joanne Murphy
	18.00	Chilton	Mary Moran
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Joseph and Mildred Thompson
12	10.00	Aycliffe	Jack McCormick (A)
Jan	10.30	Ferryhill	Alice, James, Damien and Leonard Gee
	12.30	Aycliffe	Polish language mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Joyce McCartin (RIP)

Next week-end: collection of biscuits, tinned tomatoes and chick peas etc for the **Diocesan Refugee Centre**.

Tuesday 14 January, 2.30pm at Holy Name, Jesmond: Newman Association talk by John Murray on **Monsignor Kevin Nichols: the poem**.

Sunday 19 January, 9am at St Joseph’s: Deacon Patrick Rutherford (Membership Support Officer for the **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** in the diocese) will talk about the SVP and its role in the local area. 07557562715.

Thursday 23 January, 6:30pm at St Joseph’s: follow-up meeting with **Deacon Patrick Rutherford** for those interested in learning more and who might consider joining the SVP.

Saturday 25 January, 12.45pm at St Mary’s: **SVP New Year party**. List at the back of church for names.

Sunday 26 January, 11am at St Mary’s:

Baptism **Bailey Darren Johnson**