

Journey with Confidence

One of the things we have not been able to do effectively during this pandemic is to embark on a holiday trip. This has been a difficult time for everyone and we can't wait to make this trip when things get close to normal. Every journey, as we know, begins with a decision and a plan to take a trip from a place of origin to a destination.

The Lenten season is like a forty-day journey with Jesus in the wilderness of our spiritual lives. Like every other trip we take, we begin with a decision and a plan to leave our original positions with the hope of getting to our desired destinations. But this plan cannot be achieved without the assurances that certify that we will be arriving at our desired target. So we enter the bus, train or plane with this already made confidence that it will take us from Point A to Point B. We do this without minding or knowing who is driving these vehicles. All we have is that assurance that this person will fulfil his own part of the bargain because we have paid for the trip. The point is that, in every journey we embark, we seem to trust people we don't know with our lives and safety, only because we believe we have made our financial commitment.

The Lenten season reflects the same journey experience with a huge difference. In this journey we not only know the driver of this vehicle like Noah, we also have a covenant with him. God provides the assurance we need to embark on this life-changing experience. He leads us through the wilderness of temptations with his abiding presence, because He has been there before. In Jesus, God has experienced this wilderness, where he remained for forty days to be tempted by the devil. Having been there before, He reassures us that He is with us all through these moments of transition to a better life. He knows it is not an easy road, but he better than a SatNav, that takes us to places we have not been before. Because he is so committed in fulfilling his own part of this covenant, if only we choose to fulfil that pledge we have made at the start of this journey on Ash Wednesday: *to repent and believe in the Gospel*. When you have a covenant with someone, whether as a friend, a colleague, a wife, an employer or employee, you fulfil your part with the trust that the other party will do the same. Remembering this trust keeps us working hard for good. In this spiritual Journey, God remembers His own promises to us. The question is, do we remember ours?

(Pause and Ponder with Fr. Anthony C. Ohaekwusi)

Thus Sunday, 21 February 4 - 5.15pm (for 6 weeks): : **What do you believe?** Welcome and introduction, short film, discussions, feedback. Zoom link from hope@stcharlesrcc.co.uk

Family Fast Day.

We are unable to have our traditional soup supper at **All Saints** but donations for the Cafod Lent appeal can be left after Mass in any of churches, or online on the Cafod website. Donations can be made by text, texting "Lent" followed by the amount you wish to donate to 70460 eg LENT 10 70460 The appeal is part of the Walk for Water campaign to provide safe water in communities around the world.

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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21 February 2021: Lent 1B



We need the Jesus of the wilderness, who wrestled with real dangers during those forty days, who endured a wild unsafe place where the Holy Spirit, Satan, wild beasts, and angels resided together. Our wilderness appears, unbidden and unwelcome. We will survive with Jesus, our companion who knows the way. Why did Jesus need the wilderness? Why do we? To learn that as God's children we can be simultaneously loved and uncomfortable, loved and vulnerable. In the wilderness, the love that survives is flinty, not soft and learning to trust - it takes time. As we begin our journey into Lent, may we experience the companionship of Jesus whose vulnerability became his strength. Let us enter our wilderness with courage and learn who we are - the precious and beautiful children of God. When the angels in all their secret guises whisper the name 'beloved' into our ears, may we listen, and believe them.

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	Golden Wedding Veronica and Peter Richardson
20	16.00	Shildon	Our parish family
Feb	17.30	Aycliffe	Leo Burey (A)
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Pat and Anthony Fleming
21	10.00	Aycliffe	Bob Kennedy (A)
Feb	10.30	Ferryhill	Reazo Marino (very ill)
	<u>12.30</u>	Aycliffe	Polish Language Mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	William Burns

Lent 2021

We were enjoying a couple of pints, putting the world right, being grumpy old men and having a laugh. Long standing friendship and an easy trust between us often led to honest sharing about how we coped with our human limitations. On that day we frankly knew we needed to do more about ourselves. You can wing it only for so long. Some people seem to have things together pretty well. Maybe they have; maybe they only appear to have. Managing being human is a task we all share. Messy days and fleeting fantasies need to give way to facing our limits and habits and getting real - really real. The inside story of ourselves joins us to a struggling humanity that lives with wet Fridays as well as blissful sunshine.

But God loves us, even when we don't love ourselves. The mind-bending proof comes in sending his beloved Son into human weakness, vulnerability and pain. Identifying with the problem has never been more powerfully expressed.

Jesus worked on himself too. We all depended on it. Today's brief Gospel passage has him getting away for a stretch of time into what's graphically called the wilderness, in order to prepare humanly for his mission.

Facing up to what does and doesn't work requires thought - lots of it, reflecting on who we are, and it can be essential. For us it can be a slow dance with grace. Jesus' call for repentance means acknowledging our faults, seeking acceptance nonetheless and always starting again, hoping we advance incrementally through constant prayerful effort.

Responding to life's unfolding story is often untidy.

We can choose our own times of reflection as Jesus did. It's Lent. It can be a gentle time of sitting with Jesus and his stories and teaching, to reconsider how we reach out to grasp the gift of life and share it with others. We've all benefited from many who've done that for us. How we go about it is personal, but it calls for new thinking as well as what's worked before. You're in good company. Across these Lenten weeks we're joined by millions of our sisters and brothers choosing to revisit how we live with our God of love.

Lent is not an assault course, but it can be an honest attempt to recognise the part that the Cross plays in our lives.

We have some five weeks before the events of Holy Week. Using the time well is important - others may depend on how well we live through these days. Understanding more about Jesus is a requirement.

Please pray for all the sick

Eileen Brownbridge, Mary Eales, Cathy Bolton, John Amos, Jean Bolton, Eileen Walsh, Blanche Collingson, Ann Lee, Lynda Whelbourn, Phyllis Musgrave, Terry Cheesmond, Janet Holmes, Raymond Lowey, Julie Kirkbride, Jacob, Vilna Woolhead, Doris Irwin, John Regan, Elaine McCartney, Joan Hartnell, Savannah Philips, Claire, John Garnham, Alfie Pennington, Suzanne Winship, Jamie Spence, Helen Hall, Frank Morrell, Coulson family, Jennie Gayson, Pauline McCormack, Paula Todd.

This week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	Private Intention	
	09.45	Aycliffe	<u>Rosary</u>	
22	10.00	Aycliffe	Jack Gordon (Anniversary)	
Tue	09.30	Coundon	Private Intention	
Feb	09.45	Aycliffe	<u>Morning Prayer</u>	
	23	10.00	Kevin Neasham (RIP)	
	13.30	Coundon	Exposition and Rosary.	
	19.00	Aycliffe	Prayer Group	
	19.00	Coundon	Exposition and Rosary.	
Wed	24	09.15	Ferryhill	Tuk and Nicky Stewart
	09.30	Shildon	<u>Stations of the Cross</u>	
	10.00	Shildon	George and Ena Cornforth	
	11.00	Aycliffe	<u>Exposition</u>	
	12.00	Aycliffe	Ann Lee (RIP)	
Thu	25	09.30	Coundon	Ian and Al Moore
	09.45	Aycliffe	<u>Prayers for Healing</u>	
	10.00	Aycliffe	Michael Dryden and Paul Tenwick (A)	
	19.00	Aycliffe	Exposition	
Fri	26	09.30	Coundon	Private Intention
	09.30	Aycliffe	<u>Stations of the Cross</u>	
	10.00	Aycliffe	Catherine McHarding	
Sat	27	09.30	Coundon	The Gordon family
	10.00	Coundon	Exposition and confession	

Please pray for **Michelle Harrison** who died this week.

Wednesday: 12 noon mass at **St Mary's** (during Lent)

Friday, **Family Fast Day**

Next week-end,

Second Sunday of Lent Year B

The story of the **Transfiguration**, when Jesus is seen by Peter, James and John for who He really is - God Himself - is a reminder to us that God is always with us; we are never alone, and we should never be afraid.

Sat	12.00	Aycliffe	Lawrence Emm (operation)
27	16.00	Shildon	Kate Johnson (A)
Feb	17.30	Aycliffe	John, Ellen Tatham (wedding anniversary)
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Joe and Ann Gordon
28	10.00	Aycliffe	A sick person
Feb	10.30	Ferryhill	Roy Myers (anniversary)
	11.30	Aycliffe	Polish Language Mass
	15.00	Coundon	<u>Stations of the Cross</u>
	18.00	Aycliffe	Jack and Cecilia Stubbs (RIP)