

Sunday 28th December 2025: The Holy Family

After listening to today's Gospel, Flight into Egypt (Matt. 2: 13-15, 19), consider this reflection.

The flight into Egypt is a splendid gospel for the feast of the Holy Family. It tells of a time of the acutest danger, when Mary and Joseph must have been at their wits' end in caring for their precious child, and so were most bound together as an endangered family, and at their most reliant on God in a situation humanly hopeless.

The powerful, resourceful and pitiless Herod was a formidable threat; he would have no scruples about killing a few male children in the little hill-town of Bethlehem. There is also a further dimension: on many occasions, and especially here, Matthew depicts Jesus as a Second Moses: from the beginning Herod threatens Jesus' life just as Pharaoh had threatened Moses' survival as a baby. Just as Moses went into exile after killing the Egyptian overseer, so Jesus also goes into exile, to return when the threat is past. Of both it is said, 'Those who wanted to kill you/the child are dead' (cf. Exodus 4:19). Later Jesus will be seen as the Second Moses when he stays forty days and nights fasting in the desert, and when he delivers the new Law at the Sermon on the Mount and at the Transfiguration. *What can you do to bind your family more closely together in Christ?*

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

PLEASE PRAY FOR: Those who have died recently. Those in our parishes who are sick or who may need our thoughts & prayers. And those of our parishes whose anniversary occurs at this time.

KEEP IN TOUCH: NE12Catholic@diocesehn.org.uk or 0191 268 4222.

Weekend mass live on YouTube, search St Mary of the Rosary.

Newsletters & Homilies can be viewed via Facebook page NE12Catholic

SAFEGUARDING: Our safeguarding representatives are:

St Aidan's - Ms B Lamb // St Mary's - Mrs A Parry

If you have any safeguarding questions, please speak to our reps or visit www.diocesehn.org.uk/services/safeguarding for information & support.

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE: News & information about events happening across our diocese can be found via www.diocesehn.org.uk

Parish Newsletter:

St. Aidan's & St. Mary's RC Churches

Rev. Sean Hall

Deacon Alison Rebello

Tel. 0191 268 4222

www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk

Join us on Facebook: NE12Catholic

For Baptisms, First Holy Communions and Confirmations, please email NE12Catholic@diocesehn.org.uk



Sunday 21st December 2025:

Fourth Sunday of Advent

After listening to today's Gospel,

Emmanuel (Matthew 1: 18-24), consider this reflection.

Matthew begins his Gospel about the birth of Jesus with a long and elaborately formal genealogy of Joseph. But Jesus is the son of Mary, not of Joseph! The whole point of this story is that Joseph is not the genealogical father of Jesus, but adopts Jesus into his line, the line of King David. At first Joseph is hesitant to do so, presumably thinking that he is unworthy to acknowledge the child as his own, and unworthy to bond with Mary who is with child by the Holy Spirit.

But the angel insists that only Joseph can do this job

('Do not be afraid,' he says). As soon as the child is born, he is given the name Jesus, and is given it by Joseph. It is the father's prerogative to name a son, and by so doing Joseph takes the child as his own.

We hear little more of Joseph, but what a joy it must have been to have Jesus as a son! What a relationship there must have been!

What responsibility too! When Jesus calls God his 'Father', he is using something of the concept of 'father' which must have been formed in his mind by his adoptive father, Joseph, the perfect ideal of the loving parent. *Why is it important that Jesus should be adopted into David's line? What sort of father would Joseph have been, and what can we learn from him?*

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

NATIVITY CRIBS: We are setting up our cribs at both St Aidan's & St Mary's after Mass today (Sunday). Volunteers to assist would be appreciated.

CHRISTMAS TREE STARS: Available in our churches for you to remember or celebrate family members and friends. Write a name on a star which will then decorate our trees. All will be prayed for during our Christmas Masses.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: Donations to both churches for our much anticipated Christmas flowers are most welcome. There are baskets for your kind donations at entrances to church. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES: We will be singing carols before both Christmas Eve Masses. Mass will start at St Mary's at 4:30pm & at St Aidan's at 6:30pm. Please remember our churches will be busy. Arrive in plenty of time & please be considerate with parking. We look forward to celebrating with everyone.

ADVENT ALMS: This year's collection will help fund St Cuthbert's new dedicated service to support women experiencing homelessness, leaving prison or at risk of re-offending. Thank you for your generosity.

COLLECTIONS: 14th December
St Aidan's - Loose Plate: £253.00 / Envelopes: £57.00 / Hall hire: £34.00
Candles: £109.50 / Donations: £20.00 / Missio Red Boxes: £57.00
St Mary's - Loose Plate: £273.30 / Envelopes: £58.00 / Donations: £50.00
Candles: £47.75 / Advent Alms: £20.00 / Christmas Flowers: £40.00
Friday Coffee Morning: £95.00 (Mill Hill Sisters)
Please email for info re standing orders, offertory envelopes or Gift Aid.

CLOSING OUR HOLY DOORS: The Year of Jubilee ends in January 2026. Bishop Stephen will close our Holy Doors on 6th Jan - The Feast of Epiphany. Cathedral Church of St Mary, Newcastle: Mass at 12.05pm. St Joseph's Church, Hartlepool: Mass at 6.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

DATE FOR THE (NEW) DIARY: Newman Tyneside Circle invites you to hear Fr Sean Hall present *Does Church Doctrine Change?* at Holy Name Church, Jesmond on Tuesday 13 January 2026, at 7.30pm. St John Henry Newman wrote, in his Essay on the Development of Doctrine, 'Here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often'. Regarding in particular the Sacrament of Orders, what changes might be possible? What might not be possible in the future?

<u>MASS INTENTIONS:</u> w/c 21st & 28th December 2025		
Sat 20th (St. Mary's)	5:30pm	Ena and John Duffy
Sun 21st (St. Aidan's)	9:15am	Tony Ingoe
Sun 21st (St. Mary's)	11:00am	D'cd members of Bell & Thompson Families
* Sun 21st (St. Mary's)	3:00pm	Penitential Service
* Mon 22nd	** NO MASS **	
Tues 23rd (St. Mary's)	10.00am	Stephen Thompson
Wed 24th (St. Mary's)	4:30pm	People of the Parish
Wed 24th (St. Aidan's)	6:30pm	People of the Parish
* Thurs 25th (St. Mary's)	10.00am	Priest's Intention
Fri 26th (St. Mary's)	10:00am	Elsie and Jimmy Carr
* Sat 27th (St Mary's)	11.00am	Confession
Sat 27th (St. Mary's)	5:30pm	Olive and Joseph Crowe
Sun 28th (St. Aidan's)	9:15am	James Allan Scott
Sun 28th (St. Mary's)	11:00am	John Hannon
* Mon 29th	** NO MASS **	
Tues 30th (St. Mary's)	10.00am	Jenny Kenny
Wed 31st (St. Aidan's)	10.00am	Elly and those sick in the parish
* Thurs 1st Jan (St Mary's)	10.00am	Priest's Intention
Fri 2nd (St Mary's)	10.00am	Paul & Maire Golden Wedding Anniversary
* Sat 3rd (St Aidan's)	11.00am	Confession
Sat 3rd (St Mary's)	5.30pm	Keith Nesbitt
Sun 4th (St Aidan's)	9.15am	Anderson Family
Sun 4th (St Mary's)	11.00am	People of the Parish
* Mon 5th (St Aidan's)	6.00pm	Eucharistic Adoration

For Mass Intentions, please see envelopes in our churches.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyous Christmas

