



SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER 2023

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**The Parishes of:** Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington  
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

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## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

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### **26th Sunday of the Year (A) : Matthew 21: 28-32**

Frank was fed up with politics. He'd had a discussion on the doorstep with a man canvassing for his vote. He wasn't impressed. The man was so entrenched in his message that he couldn't admit to better alternatives.

With Frank, discussions often turned to questions of power and authority. Abilities and capacity for making decisions were big on his agenda. Defending the underdog, supporting victims of abusive power and upholding a raft of individuals' rights claimed a lot of his time and energy.

Power is given to us for service. We are here to make life possible for one another. We are enablers, bringing about what assists and ennobles the quality of life in others - especially in the poorest and those overlooked, denied or who have no voice.

Jesus came to serve and not to be served. He was a critic of the authorities, especially the religious authorities of his own time and the way they were so focussed on themselves. They were keen on words and pronouncements, not good on the actions, not practising what they preached.

The painful truth is that we can be so self-oriented that we can miss Jesus and his message. The leaders of his day were fixed in their thinking, so absorbed in their being right that they wouldn't change their minds. Jesus points out sharply that tax collectors and prostitutes were more open to change than the chief priests and elders of the people.

We all live by various, inherited patterns of belief and practice, a certain view of history and culture to which we belong and we subscribe. It's not fixed and some of it will not be real. The people who can help us to see better will, like the Lord, show us that we must never get so stuck in our thinking and behaviour that we assume we cannot change.

Today's parable traps the leaders who said the right things but, like the second son in the story, didn't follow through. The individuals like the first lad who changed his mind and acted rightly after giving it more thought challenge us to get out of long established habits and learn new things. This may require humility and courage. What will others think if I change? They may quietly thank God and learn from the example!



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### **Pope Francis on the detail of caring**

Let us not forget that Jesus asked his disciples to pay attention to details.

The little detail that wine was running out at a party.

The little detail that one sheep was missing.

The little detail of noticing the widow who offered her two small coins.

The little detail of having spare oil for the lamps, should the bridegroom delay.

The little detail of asking the disciples how many loaves of bread they had.

The little detail of having a fire burning and a fish cooking as he waited for the disciples at daybreak.

A community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan.

***Rejoice and Be Glad - Paras 144 and 145***