



SUNDAY 1 JULY 2020

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

14th Sunday of the Year (A): Matthew 11: 25-30

Albert was a man of the people. So many folks said so. He had the easy knack of giving the impression that you'd know each other for years - and that on a first meeting. Was it his smile? The warmth in his eyes that lit his face? He read you without sitting in judgement, listened without interruption. People loved him. They felt accepted just as they stood, no need to prove anything.

Some folks seem to have that disposition as a gift, others - that's most of us - have to work at it. We may well know and say that all people are created equal, but our behaviour may indicate we still have miles to go in living it out. I think we know the real thing when we see it. In Jesus people saw the real thing. He mirrored the face of his Father, letting you know you are included in a welcoming love. We're asked to be like Jesus. For me, Albert was an example.

Jesus was a man of the people. Today's Gospel reminds us how he cherished ordinary folk who did know the real thing. They had no status in the eyes of the movers and shakers of the world. They coped daily with the complexities of survival and maintenance. They were open to change. They carried no torch for the status quo. They're the salt of the earth and he told them so.

The Lord welcomed and continues to welcome all who bear burdens too heavy to carry alone. "Come to me", he invites. The image he gives is powerful. Oxen and strong farm animals were yoked together to pull ploughs, carts and much else. He invites us to be yoked with him so that we don't have to do the work on our own. He takes the lead, like an experienced animal linked with a younger one. "Learn from me", he says, watch what I do. You're not on your own. "And be gentle, be humble".

Can we be gentle with ourselves and one another? Can we be humble - that's accepting our neediness as well as our strengths. We still have a lot to learn. It's his main request - learn from me, follow me, you're a disciple, a learner, a student. Imagine following Jesus - he teaches at three miles an hour. Try and stay with him.

Sit with the Gospel. Hear Jesus talking to you, personally. See what he's like. Feel the gentle and humble man of the people, the Son of God. Stay with the Gospel text, and if it doesn't sound odd, marinate yourself in the message! Live with his words and apply them to you. Let him teach us. There's nothing like it.



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

The Joy of the Gospel - Pope Francis

In our time humanity is experiencing a turning point in its history, as we can see from the advances being made in so many fields. We can only praise the steps being taken to improve people's welfare in areas such as health care, education and communications. At the same time we have to remember that the majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences. A number of diseases are spreading. The hearts of many people are gripped by fear and desperation, even in so called rich countries. The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity. The epochal change has been set in motion by the enormous qualitative, quantitative, rapid and cumulative advances occurring in the sciences and technology, and by their instant application in different areas of nature and of life. We are in an age of knowledge and information, which has led to a new and often anonymous kinds of power. (*Para 52*)

Just as the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say "thou shalt not" to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalised; without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.

Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a "throw away" culture which is now spreading. (*Para 53*)