



SUNDAY 1 MAY 2022

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Third Sunday of Easter (C) : John 21: 1-19

Imagine Jesus making your breakfast. It's what happened to the fishermen disciples. It's an ongoing part of the love story about the many signals of real care and affection God has for us.

Going to visit someone ill is a bigger mark of your concern and thoughtfulness than sending a card and certainly more powerful than doing nothing. Being present, taking time and trouble, putting yourself out for others, speaks volumes even before a word is spoken. Words can be cheap. If they don't match what's going on in our hearts, they can sound hollow. Most people can spot insincerity a mile off.

Our God came not just to visit but to join us. God chose to become one of his creatures - a gesture so wild and stunning that perhaps over time, we've lost the impact of what this is saying to us. Making breakfast for his disciples I suspect wasn't the first time he'd fed them personally. Jesus loved eating with people - it creates the context for real sharing, establishing and deepening relationships. Feeding people is more than satisfying hunger. It's often a sign of hospitality and welcome, a gesture of affirmation. It can be a powerful act of love.

Having a meal ready when his friends come in from a fruitless nightshift is good planning and understanding. He takes the time, thinks ahead, gets the cooking underway. The Lord is brilliant at giving us signals of his love and regard for us. Re-imagine his healings, his listening, his standing up for the rights of the poor. Hear his taking on the big guns who show scant regard for people without clout. For our God everyone matters intensely and more so those in great need.

Jesus washes feet, works with individuals, comes back personally for Thomas, feeds 5000, teaches in ways like no one has done before, tells critical parables to shout a message of dignity and hope about his sisters and brothers. These belong to the struggling humanity he embraces, sharing human vulnerability to join us, to love and to enlighten us. We can't afford not to get the message. It also requires a loving response.

Simon Peter gets the opportunity. It's a set-up, really. Not once but three times Jesus asks him, 'Do you love me?'. It hurt. Peter had denied him three times. It's also brilliant. Peter's fervent assent gives him the chance to erase the guilt he'd carried. Jesus asks the same question of you and me. Not once - because we'll answer off the top of our heads. He asks again and again so we'll give more considered replies. God is falling over himself to tell us how much we are loved. How do you want to respond - today, tomorrow and ?



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This responsibility for God's earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world, for 'he commanded and they were created, and he established them for ever and ever, he fixed their bounds and he set a law which cannot pass away' (Psalm 148:5b-6). The laws found in the Bible dwell on relationships, not only among individuals but also with other living beings. 'You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and withhold your help.... If you chance to come upon a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs; you shall not take the mother with the young' (Deuteronomy 22: 4,6). Along these same lines, rest on the seventh day is meant not only for human being, but also so 'that your ox and your donkey may have rest' (Exodus 23:12). Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical lack of concern for other creatures.

Together with our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly, we are called to recognise that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes. 'By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory', and indeed, 'the Lord rejoices in all his works' (PS 104:31). By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws, for the Lord by wisdom founded the earth (Proverbs 3:19). In our time, the church does not simply state that other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish.

- *Laudato Si paras 68-69*