



SUNDAY 10 JULY 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

15th Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 10: 25-37

I've often felt ashamed. It happens when I see people meeting a need I'd overlooked or been slow to see if I could do anything to help.

None of us can respond to all the multiple needs around us or reply to the many requests in emails, social media and the charity letters that drop through our doors. Many people don't ask openly for help but painfully we witness their need. If we begin to juggle with conscience or diary to explore possible help, we're part way there. The choices we make say a lot about us.

My good friend Paddy is always ready to air his dilemmas about what he can and can't manage. He's vocal about callous people, is no stranger to guilt feelings about heartfelt issues and knows when he makes a poor excuse. We've all been there, if we're honest.

Today's Gospel story about the good Samaritan was Jesus' response to a nit-picking lawyer anxious to absolve himself by legal footwork of having to be a caring human being. Expand the definition of neighbour. It means everyone, especially someone in need - and that's all of us in different degrees. In the folklore stories of street community life years ago, you helped your neighbour today and they might be helping you tomorrow. Getting through till Friday was done together.

In Jesus' story, the priest and the Levite, the religious individuals, didn't get involved in helping the victim beaten by thieves, saving themselves from being ritually unclean. We can find ourselves in Church life being legally unable to help an individual, but pastorally it's imperative that we do what we can to receive them well and find ways of showing the love of God. We're all made in his image and likeness. We're not let off the hook.

Jesus broke the laws about the Sabbath and about ritual purity. Excusing ourselves from loving our neighbour because what's needed is not in our job description, pay scale or training, is not on. The Lord is our mentor and we carry his life and his face for one another. Others have done it for us. Living in the real world makes us dependent.

Immersed as we are in rising prices, increasing stringency and growing anxiety and distress, the love we professedly show to God is measured by our love of neighbours. The foot-washing Jesus asks us if we've understood what he's done, the lesson of serving he's delivered, and leaves us to answer honestly. We do get it - don't we?



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Pope Francis on the Good Samaritan

Jesus tells the story of a man assaulted by thieves and lying injured on the wayside. Several people passed him by, but failed to stop. There were people holding important social positions, yet lacking in real concern for the common good. They would not waste a couple of minutes caring for the injured man, or even in calling for help. Only one person stopped, approached the man and cared for him personally, even spending his own money to provide for his needs. He also gave him something that in our frenetic world we cling to tightly; he gave him his time. Certainly, he had his own plans for that day, his own needs, commitments and desires. Yet he was able to put all that aside when confronted with someone in need. Without even knowing the injured man, he saw him as deserving of his time and attention.

Someone is assaulted on our street, and many hurry off as if they did not notice. People hit someone with their car and then flee the scene. Their only desire is to avoid problems; it does not matter that, through their fault, another person could die. All these are signs of an approach to life that is spreading in various and subtle ways. What is more, caught up as we are with our own needs, the sight of a person who is suffering disturbs us. It makes us uneasy, since we have no time to waste on other people's problems. These are symptoms of an unhealthy society. A society that seeks prosperity but turns its back on suffering.

- *Fratelli tutti* paras 63 and 65