



SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2024

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

.19th Sunday of the Year (B) John 6: 41-51

Greg was in my class at school. We played in the same streets, pretty well grew up together. But I hadn't known how gifted he was and turned out to be. Music was his thing. He says he got it from his dad.

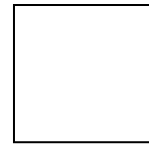
Watching young people grow, building relationships and careers is a sobering business - I ask myself what I've learnt in the same time. Young people have a great capacity to teach. Their development, growth and risk taking can challenge us.

We know nothing of Jesus early years, his life at home, his learning a trade from St Joseph. Somewhere in his early 30s he begins to be recognised as a healer and teacher with a unique insight and understanding of God. I grew up with cheesy unappealing pictures of a humourless man with a halo round his head. His divinity was emphasised so much he almost walked on air. The very evident humanity of Jesus from Nazareth created the problem in today's Gospel reading.

The people he'd fed assumed he was the son of Joseph and Mary. We can't blame them. We know more. They didn't. Claiming to be heaven-sent and that the Father's teaching is about himself is more than a struggle for them. Jesus brings them and us back to food. It's astonishing how often food becomes a vehicle and context for teaching. So life sustaining, creating companions, bringing nourishment, and strength.

The people struggled with Jesus' divinity. We need to see God in Jesus' humanity. To have seen him is to have seen the Father. It's in Jesus' smile, his voice, it's in his eyes. The body language of the one who describes himself as gentle and humble in heart, led many ordinary people to know they'd met the almighty and he is love on legs. Hopefully we sometimes experience that too.

We're being challenged differently. A small piece of unleavened bread is put into our hands. We know religious terms like 'Bread of Life; but our translation task is to know the smiling, feeding hand of God looking after us because we're loved. Jesus taught at many a table. He still does. He nourishes, gives life, and is drawing us more and more into his company. Enjoy being fed in the company of others. We're being drawn into the mystery of vulnerable love that cost Jesus' life and he wants to enjoy our friendship. Sit with him and allow the experience to speak to you before you say a word.



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Pope Francis on human dignity

The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies. At times, however, they seem to be a mere addendum imported from without in order to fill out a political discourse lacking in perspectives or plans for true and integral development. How many words prove irksome to this system! It is irksome when the question of ethics is raised, when global solidarity is invoked, when the distribution of goods is mentioned, when reference is made to protecting labour and defending the dignity of the powerless, when allusion is made to a God who demands a commitment to justice. At other times these issues are exploited by a rhetoric which cheapens them. Casual indifference in the face of such questions empties our lives and our words of all meaning. Business is a vocation, and a noble vocation, provided that those engaged in it see themselves challenged by a greater meaning in life; this will enable them truly to serve the common good by striving to increase the goods of this world and to make them more accessible to all.

- *The Joy of the Gospel—para 203*