



SUNDAY 12 APRIL 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

Easter Sunday (A): John 20: 1-9

You might have noticed that the urge to live can smash through unlikely obstacles. Weeds break through concrete. We hear stories of sicknesses overcome by a determined fight to stay alive that thrill the heart and bring a tear to the eye. And whether your garden glows with beautiful flowers or just sports a crop of cheap and cheerful dandelions, nature shouts a pulsating message—life is hard to suppress! Craving oxygen and light, life’s heartbeat preaches victory against the odds.

Resurrection has to be celebrated. It heralds the endearing news that life is more final than death and indeed that death is the gatekeeper to a more abundant life. During the restrictions of the Coronavirus we shouldn't lose the connection with the first Holy Week. It was a time of fear, loneliness, violence, stress and betrayal. Disorientation and loss characterised that time. Our current experience, awkward or even damaging as it may be, does not compare with what Jesus and his friends went through. But it can intentionally become part of our walking with him.

It’s easy to speak of ‘when things return to normal...’ except that the new normal will not be like the old normal—or it shouldn’t be. If we fail to learn from this experience and not alter our thinking and behaviour, we’ll have missed how the God who is always here has been here with us—and we with him—in these different and difficult days.

Mary Magdalen and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognise the risen Jesus—he was different. Risen life is not like the old life. Our post-COVID 19 life should be different—scarred with the pains of isolation and blessed with the new initiatives that have risen in so many of those around us.

The practical actions and stunning dedication shown by professionals and volunteers alike, are a testimony to human solidarity and a selfishness striving to express what being redeemed means. So how have you understood what’s happening here? In what ways does the risen Jesus open the Scriptures to help us see all over again that our God serves us in every gesture of love that we failed to notice or took for granted?

The message of Easter is always new. Love has come again like the new shoots of spring and demands your attention. Happy Easter!



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Prayer

Lord, we place into your hands our families and loved ones, especially those who are elderly or sick, anxious or lonely. You know their needs and we ask you to be close to them.

We place into your hands the people in our medical and emergency services and their families. We pray for the key workers whose day to day work protects and sustains us. We give thanks for them and we ask you to uphold them in health, strength and courage.

We pray for those in leadership and governance during these days. We ask you to give them the wisdom to lead and to listen and the vision to act for the common good.

We pray for ourselves as a society. Now, more than ever, we recognise our dependence on each other. Teach us how to grow in solidarity, in gratitude and in care for one another.

You have loved each of us into life and counted every hair on our heads. We place in your hands those who have died. Stay with us in our sorrow and give us hope.

Pray with Mary who journeyed with her Son Jesus in his suffering.

Hail Mary