



SUNDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2021

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

6th Sunday of the Year (B): Mark 1:40-45

"It's bad enough being disabled", Alec was telling me, "But the unkind comments I get on top of this make things worse. You'd expect to receive some understanding, but the ignorance is cruel".

Government policies and some behind the counter telephone operatives quoting online directives came under fire too. Black and white decisions, insensitive and simplistic interpretations lacked humanity according to Alec's family. We've heard it before and similar stuff bothered Jesus too.

The leper in today's Gospel story takes a risk and approaches Jesus when he should legally have kept his distance. The Lord also breaks the rules and touches the leper. Our translation says Jesus felt sorry for him. The original Greek account describes the Lord as 'angry', not sorry. He feels for this man. The religious consequences of the time cut the leper off from his family and the temple, all that on top of his dreadful disease. The Lord's frustration shows. He heals the man without hesitation. He's giving him back much more than eliminating his disfigurement.

Jesus comes from a compassionate God. He challenges the systems that cripple and control. He takes on restrictive traditions that diminish human dignity. Love and compassion fight against shameful treatments labelled as religiously respectable. They have no connection with God.

There are consequences. The one-time leper can't keep quiet - indeed his new health and status are rapidly becoming public facts. The Lord swaps places with the man. Jesus now can't go where he likes. Standing up for others is a requirement of Jesus' followers. It takes nerve and needs support. Alliances of like-minded game-changers supply the voltage behind campaigns. They start petitions and arrange publicity-seeking marches. We've recently seen the worst. The world constantly needs to shout about the best.

Challenging unfairness and ridicule, applauding the courage of whistle-blowers unmasking injustice and working constantly and consistently to establish the equality in which we are all created never ceases to be important. It's self-evident that evil flourishes when good people do nothing. The followers of the Lord know that 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild' is a travesty of the passionate lover of people who gave his life so that his sisters and brothers could be freed from sin and all manner of unjust contrivance.

Stand in the leper's shoes - if he had any - and tell the story to his family like he did when he finally got back home. Get it?



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The Global Catholic Movement invites you to "Global Healing."

In 2015, Pope Francis published his ground-breaking letter on the environment *Laudato Si'*. Since then, millions of people worldwide have joined the global movement to address the environmental crisis our world is facing. This Lent, we are inviting YOU to join us for a series of reflective evenings with inspiring speakers, prayer and discussion, using the film-based resource "Global Healing". These engaging documentaries will inform and challenge people to respond to Pope Francis' call to Care for Our Common Home. Suitable for all who are concerned about what is happening to our world and who want to take action.

When? Six Thursdays from 18th February – 25th March 2021, 7.30pm – 8.30pm **How to join?** To register please click

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcvcOuuqzsvEtMBwz2hxBzhhvwy0hcgvoEb>

or email jane@catholicclimatemovement.global

Hosted by GCCM *Laudato Si'* Animators in the UK.

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience...Truly, much can be done!" (*Laudato Si'*, 217, 180)



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