



SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 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

2nd Sunday of the Year (B): John 1: 35-42

Jake was introduced to Claire, his future wife, by a mutual friend. Maybe many of the significant people in your life and mine came through introductions by others. Is there such a thing as coincidence or are some things apparently designed to happen? Sometimes it seems casual like who bumps into who and nothing more. What we make of it or what God does with it can change lives.

How quickly do we make decisions about people? Are first impressions reliable? Gut reactions happen before we're aware. Instant likes or dislikes can be embarrassingly erratic. It's not easy to be patient. We're not born as good listeners.

Yet the God who has known us before we took our first breath chose to walk among us. Watch Jesus as he senses the curiosity of Andrew and another person coached by John the Baptist. Jesus' time is theirs. The invitation back to his place has no pressure - come and see for yourself. The Baptist has made up his own mind. Check it out. Why take someone else's opinion? Second hand information cries out for proof. This could be an important meeting.

As the years seem to whizz by more and more quickly do we join the pace or choose to take time for our relationships? More and more people want to tell us what to think and how to spend our time. The old Irish quip that 'the man who made time made plenty of it', can raise a smile but the invitation to spend time in Jesus' company is an open and permanent offer. Today's Gospel may challenge us honestly to admit whether or not we share enough of our time with him.

See what happens if we do. John the Baptist points out the Lamb of God. Andrew and his mate want to know more. Andrew tells his brother Simon. Simon also wants an introduction. The process is what we refer to now as an example of evangelisation. Don't be put off by the term. It's about friendship. It's how God works.

Who introduced you to Jesus? Is it still happening? Has it stopped with you or do you make introductions to others? We meet him just about everywhere if we're open to engaging with his presence in others - your family, friends, the poor and needy, in the Gospel stories and in the Church.

Curiosity and fascination about people become doors to discovery. Jesus hides within love and compassion, in patience and kindness. Andrew met Jesus at about 4 o'clock and spent the rest of the day with him. Two thousand years of time since then have expanded the story. You are a new chapter. We all are. The story continues. We can decide who we bring into it.



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Pope Francis on working together

It continues to be regrettable that global crises are being squandered when they could be the occasions to bring about beneficial changes. This is what happened in the 2007-2008 financial crisis and again in the Covid 19 crisis. For the actual strategies developed worldwide in the wake of those crises fostered greater individualism, less integration and increased freedom for the truly powerful, who always find a way to escape unscathed.

More than saving the old multilateralism, it appears that the current challenge is to reconfigure and recreate it, taking into account the new world situation. I invite you to recognize that many groups and organisations within civil society help to compensate for the shortcomings of the international community, its lack of coordination in complex situations, and its lack of attention to fundamental human rights. For example, the Ottawa Process against the use, production and manufacture of antipersonnel mines is one example that shows how civil society with its organisations is capable of creating effective dynamics that the United Nations cannot. In this way, the principle of subsidiarity is applied also to the global local relationship.

- Laudate Deum paras 36-37