



SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER 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

Thirty Third Sunday of the Year (B): Mark 13:24-32

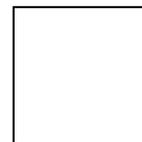
COP26 has aired for the world crucial questions about responding to climate change. Good and impassioned contributions have emphasised our responsibility. But it remains an inadequate response to meet the real needs. More must be pursued from here onwards.

For years, warm words and promises, denials, vested interests, greed and money-making have wasted the time that could have established effective ways to save our ecology. Listening to the readings today we may feel that the graphically described apocalyptic vision might be coming true. We are not meant to take these images literally and must not. But they do remind us that our life here is finite. On this important Remembrance Sunday we are all too aware that each of us will die one day. St Mark wrote his Gospel during a time of persecution. Fear and distress and a sense of doom tend at such times to become more common. But the readings emphatically assert that God is in charge. Our response must be one of hope. Jesus will return in glory - we'll celebrate it during Advent. His glory will be so brilliant that even the sun, moon and stars will be dark in comparison.

Much in the world distresses and depresses us if we let it. Precisely for this reason the Gospel carries a message of hope. Our God involved himself deeply in the suffering and upheavals of human life. We meet him in such painful and demanding times.

Jesus gives us an image of new life. He speaks of the fig tree. New life nestles around us even in dormant or worrying times. Fields ploughed a short ago are sprouting already. Buds will emerge on skinny twigs and in unlikely places. The old order must die before the new can emerge. Our distress and anxiety are very real. Our uncertainty about how we are to manage and cope can haunt us. Be of good heart. The Lord is with us.

The capacity to trust is God's gift. We may need friendly faces and voices to help us find it at times. This may well be part of our mission now. Working to save the world's ecology, we must recall that the Son of God came to save the world and his salvation is assured. Have faith in the cycle of living and dying and rising again. Plant a tree as a symbol of your faith, your hope and your love of all life. Big thanks.



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Pope Francis on housing

The extreme poverty experienced in areas lacking harmony, open spaces or potential for integration, can lead to incidents of brutality and to exploitation by criminal organisations. In the unstable neighbourhoods of mega-cities, the daily experience of overcrowding and social anonymity can create a sense of uprootedness which spawns antisocial behaviour and violence. Nonetheless, I wish to insist that love always proves more powerful. Many people in these conditions are able to weave bonds of belonging and togetherness which convert overcrowding into an experience of community in which the walls of the ego are torn down and the barriers of selfishness overcome. This experience of a communitarian salvation often generates creative ideas for the improvement of a building or a neighbourhood.

Given the interrelationship between living space and human behaviour, those who design buildings, neighbourhoods, public spaces and cities ought to draw on the various disciplines which help us to understand people's thought processes, symbolic language and ways of acting. It is not enough to seek the beauty of design. More precious still is the service we offer to another kind of beauty: people's quality of life, their adaptation to the environment, encounter and mutual assistance. Here too, we see how important it is that urban planning always takes into consideration the views of those who will live in these areas.

- *Laudato Si paras 149-150*