



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

SUNDAY 18 JULY 2021

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Sixteenth Sunday of the Year (B) Mark 6: 1-6

Debbie was angry as she described her husband's recent inability to work. Her anger was directed at his former employers and Tom's admirable work rate. He was now burnt out. More and more had been demanded - and given - until normal life was overtaken by thinking about and carrying out increasing projects, leaving no time for anything else.

It's not an uncommon feature of today's employment scene. While many have no work, others are pressured and driven by more being required, sometimes in less time and by inadequate resources or remuneration. Has the world gone mad? Answers on a postcard please.

Jesus recognises the need for breaks. Not just holidays, but time off to debrief, to recollect, to step back, hear yourself think learn what's there to be learnt and change direction if needed. His care for the Apostles in today's Gospel reading speaks volumes. Leave the crowds behind - they'll be back tomorrow. Take necessary unwinding time, time to share what's been happening, rest and eat, enjoy the company of others and of the Lord himself.

Work is tiring. Needs of others impel us to serve. But if we neglect ourselves, others need to care for us. No prizes for becoming a casualty by overriding good sense. But we all do it.

The pace of life and what's required to fit in with it raises questions about how we "come away and rest awhile". Otherwise we miss out on gaining insight, or being able to take the long view and see where we're going and how. Frankly, it's a daily requirement and certainly a weekly one. Leave the list of jobs behind and connect with yourself - and with the Spirit of God who lives gently within each of us.

Jesus had his own ways of being away from the crowds. In today's Gospel story he may appear to have let the Apostles have some time, but he takes on the crowds. He's our all-compassionate God, stepping in here because the people needed direction. Shepherding instincts click in quickly - they do with most of us. We need to find our space elsewhere.

The Lord rested in the company of his Father. How and where do we each find the space to be restored and at ease with who we are and with what God is doing in us? Think on it. Take the time.



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Pope Francis - a thought for today

True charity is capable of incorporating many elements in its concern for others. In the case of personal encounters, including those involving a distant or forgotten brother or sister, it can do so by employing all the resources that the institutions of an organised, free and creative society are capable of generating.

Even the Good Samaritan, for example, needed to have a nearby inn that could provide the help that he was personally unable to offer. Love of neighbour is concrete and squanders none of the resources needed to bring about historical change that can benefit the poor and disadvantaged. At times, however, ideologies or social doctrines linked to individualistic ways of acting and ineffective procedures affect only a few, while the majority of those left behind remain dependent on the goodwill of others. This demonstrates the need for a greater spirit of fraternity, but also a more effective worldwide organisation to help resolve the problems plaguing the abandoned who are suffering and dying in poor countries. It also shows that there is no one solution, no single acceptable methodology, no economic recipe that can be applied indiscriminately to all. Even the most rigorous scientific studies can propose different courses of action.

Everything, then, depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles. Otherwise, political propaganda, the media and the shapers of public opinion will continue to promote an individualistic and uncritical culture subservient to unregulated economic interests and societal institutions at the service of those who already enjoy too much power.

- *Fratelli Tutti* - paras 165-166