



SUNDAY 19 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

**2nd Sunday of Easter (A): John 20: 19-31**

**A letter to Thomas**

Dear Thomas

What a time you went through. Jesus' brutal death was shattering for you all. And, on top of everything else, the fear you shared as a group must have been immense. Then when the others excitedly told you Jesus was alive and had come into the room when you were out must have been hard to take. Your reaction says it all.

Did you need to get some space? Was that why you were out? Did you need to be alone, trying to clear your head, grieving without the added heartache of the others, taking time to re-live memories of Jesus, complaining to God about why it all had to end like this?

Did you ask 'what if...'? What if Jesus hadn't been so confrontational with the Authorities, what if he'd been more careful? He was such a wonderful teacher about God's love for us. He was still a young man, he could have had years to continue teaching and caring for the sick and the poor. What questions were going through your mind? You were someone who asked questions. You were a good listener. You wanted to know more.

The feeling of being left out must have hurt, especially if the others kept talking about it and who wouldn't. What did it do to your faith? You felt God's absence when the others felt he was still around. How hard was all that?

What was going on in your head? You were isolated. How did you handle that? What was your prayer like in the loneliness that was particularly yours? We all want a God we can see and feel, you had neither. Maybe you can help us in our isolation now?

It was more than a week before Jesus appeared to you all again. He came back for you—on your terms: he understood you. He knew how to answer your questions and took on board your demands. You asked for proof and he gave it, asking you to believe beyond your doubt.

Your reaction to Jesus at this second visit was stunning. Brilliant. The conversations following must have been worth hearing.

Faith is helped by our senses. Reassure us now when we can't see Jesus and receive him in the Eucharist. I imagine you want to tell us that we're connected to the Lord nonetheless. He's always here. You're a powerful example to us. Help us to be good listeners, to be attentive to God's words, to know we are understood and loved and that we still have more to learn.

Thank you Thomas. Pray for us please.



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ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you travelled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness". At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Lord Jesus, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with clarity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Lord, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Lord Jesus, heal us. Amen