



SUNDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2022

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Feast of Christ the King (c) Luke 23: 35-43

We now have a King in England. Following the death of our late Queen Elizabeth, much ink has been spilled on what kind of a King Charles III will be. Today we're celebrating Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. How do we understand what we're describing when we call anyone a King? It's shorthand, a title of honour but requiring great leadership.

All kings are subjected to great scrutiny. None is beyond comment and criticism. We all expect kings to model the finest of standards for us, whether we live up to them or not. Kings are seen as fair targets like all leaders, checked against impossible expectations.

With a couple of mates we bounced around a few names of how memorable or famous leaders used power. The list became long but included a rare mix of characters including Nelson Mandela, Idi Amin, Napoleon, Gandhi, Cleopatra, Martin Luther King, Hitler, our late Queen Elizabeth II, Vladimir Putin, Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill and Donald Trump! I include these to generate reactions about how leadership has been expressed. See what we mean about scrutiny? Sometimes we don't get that far - the good, the bad and the downright ugly serve to sharpen what we expect.

The King of the Universe divided opinions too—some as spontaneous as yours to the list above. He has a Kingdom but it's not of this world. He comes from a reign of love translating into human words and actions what life with the Father looks like. Jesus caused such a stir, divided opinions and lost his life because he wouldn't collude with systems that diminished the dignity of others and he consistently said so.

We're familiar enough with people who opt into government and other organisations with the best of motives but get sucked into patterns of thinking and behaving that compromise an outward-looking sense of service and become introspective and self-promoting. Jesus, King of the Universe has come so that we might have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).

We are Christ the King's subjects, living under his leadership and guidance, students of his teaching, attempting to copy his outlook and ministry, learning to care as he cares.

Today is Youth Sunday. It's hard being a kid today. The pressures on children and young people in our internet, money-driven world require of us a love and support that is constant and consistent. It needs our daily familiarity with Jesus' style and Spirit so that we give our present and future generations lived examples as citizens in God's Kingdom. At times we confront popular values, carry crosses, stand out and stand up for those without a voice. Connect and encourage the idealism of our young people. With them we can change the world.



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ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

Pope Francis speaking about The Common Good and Peace in Society

We have spoken at length about joy and love, but the word of God also speaks about the fruit of peace. (Galatians 5:22).

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others. Nor does true peace act as a pretext for justifying a social structure which silences or appeases the poor, so that the more affluent can placidly support their lifestyle while others have to make do as they can. Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised.

Nor is peace simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day towards the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect justice among men. In the end, a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.

People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let us not forget that responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.

-The Joy of the Gospel - paras 217-220