



SUNDAY 21 JULY 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

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

I hope you'll agree - we spend a lot of our thinking time and active hours for other people. We're social beings. We're dependent. We're here to make life possible for one another. Looked at through the Gospel lens, the needs of family and community define our ministry.

We all have needs. Consciously or not we're indebted to many whose hands and hearts have looked after us from before we took our first breath and will continue until we take our last. We can name significant individuals who have loved, fed, taught and cared for us. They have modelled the life-giving practicalities that describe the journey of love.

We play our part. On a good day we do it well, despite often being more aware of shortcomings than accomplishments. Giving over the odds is an occupational hazard. Very many places only work and exist through non-contracted extra hours from committed people. But it tells on us.

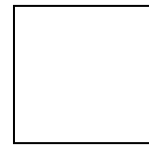
Jesus recognises the need for breaks. Not just holidays, but time off to debrief, to recollect, to step back, to hear yourself think, learn what's there to be learnt and change direction if needed. Notice his care for the apostles in today's Gospel reading. Leave the crowds behind - they'll be back tomorrow. 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 will end up caring 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, raise 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 on Jesus' life among his people

Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and others were amazed: "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matthew 8:27). His appearance was not that of an ascetic set apart from the world, nor of an enemy to the pleasant things of life. Of himself he said: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard!'" (Matthew 11:19). He was far removed from philosophies which despised the body, matter and the things of the world. Such unhealthy dualisms, nonetheless, left a mark on certain Christian thinkers in the course of history and disfigured the Gospel. Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship. It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task in a simple life which awakened no admiration at all: "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" (Mark 6:3). In this way he sanctified human labour and endowed it with a special significance for our development. As Saint John Paul II taught, "by enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, we in a way collaborate with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity".

- *Laudato Si* - para 98