



SUNDAY 22 MAY 2022

DDIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

6th Sunday of Easter (C) : John 14: 23-29

Will Shakespeare crafted words, ate them, savoured them and brought them together to punch, stroke and at times make the heart sing. He understood the power of words.

To say Jesus had an appreciation of the impact a word can make is a gigantic understatement. St John the Gospel writer calls Jesus The Word of God - attempting to describe how Jesus of Nazareth's very presence shouted even when silent. His body language, smiles and gestures, turns of his head, spoke before he caught your eye. He is the living message of God's love, no pushover, but a people person first and last. A communicator par excellence.

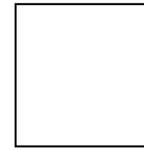
He invites, challenges, can be very direct because it matters that we get the message. This craftsman carries his Father's love, introducing us to the God of compassion and putting us on the spot. Because if we love him - not just giving our nodding assent to religious formulas rehearsed over the years - then, and here's the rub, we'll keep his word. We'll walk in step, being attentive to his presence in and around us, increasingly thinking like he thinks, like his Father thinks.

Then, he says, he and his Father move in to live with us. Living our life with us because we're living theirs. We're drawn into sharing the very life of God. They want to give us so much. We're sent out to love in their name, with all our foibles and idiosyncracies, recognisably imperfect but in solidarity with our sisters and brothers as carriers of God's presence. It's mindbending and outrageous in its extravagance and it's not easy.

If you've ever found yourself thinking, 'I could listen to so and so forever', then you've felt something important. Jesus came to bring us life to the full. Sit with him, pondering his words. No one spoke like him. Allow his Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our minds - they tend to close easily.

God still speaks. He offers us peace - and that's also unlike any other. To experience a companionship of love, deep within and beyond the ragged pace of life is his enduring gift, given because he wants to. It doesn't always feel great and it's not without its doubts.

But, awake or asleep, the Son is praising the Father in the Spirit within us all the time. Our task is to spend our lives reaching to join them though the start and finish of each day. There's nowt like it until we leave here and discover the rapture of unconditional love for eternity. Are you interested?



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Pope Francis on prayer and work

Spirit filled evangelisers are evangelisers who pray and work. Mystical notions without a solid social and missionary outreach are of no help to evangelization, nor are dissertations or social or pastoral practices which lack a spirituality which can change hearts. These unilateral and incomplete proposals only reach a few groups and prove incapable of radiating beyond them because they curtail the Gospel.

What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless, we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out.

The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer, and to my great joy groups devoted to prayer and intercession, the prayerful reading of God's word and the perpetual adoration of the Eucharist are growing at every level of ecclesial life. Even so, we must reject the temptation to offer a privatised and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the incarnation. There is always the risk that some moments of prayer can become an excuse for not offering one's life in mission, a privatised lifestyle can lead Christians to take refuge in some false forms of spirituality.

- *The Joy of the Gospel* - para 262