



# SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 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

#### 25th Sunday of the Year (B) : Mark 9: 30-37

“He would never talk about funeral arrangements”, Janet said. “Terry found it hard to think about how he would be and what would happen when his time came. He didn’t want to know.”

Terry is not alone. Many people in our society find facing their own mortality very difficult. Some of the arrangements made for funerals these days point to the same awkwardness. We all love to focus on positive and enjoyable events but healthy thinking and discussion of our own wishes about dying and how we handle it sensitively is always a great help - to everyone.

Jesus was no stranger to thoughts of his own death - to be brought about by scheming and manipulative individuals. When he spoke to his friends about it, they didn’t want to know. As with other things he talked about, they didn’t understand. And, the story goes, they were afraid to ask him. Not having him in their lives was a subject they'd rather not address. Sound familiar?

Our experience of death is often a complex mixture of witnessing illness and decline in others, suffering the pain of loss and bereavement and perhaps also a relief that distress is now over for the person who has died. It’s a physical and emotional upheaval. Sudden and violent deaths are even worse.

Family customs and support are helpful, but everyone makes the inner journey alone. Faith and the prayers of others are precious gifts. We can’t pray our usual prayers at such times. Our gut feelings and memories are graphic prayers not needing words. Being disoriented at such times feels dreadful but it proves we’re normal.

The Lord understands. Not only that, but we’re drawn into the mystery of his suffering and death and into the wonder and intended gift of resurrection. It’s heady stuff. Attempting to rehearse some of our thoughts, hopes and fears and to share them with trusted friends or dear ones can reduce anxiety. It can be a help to those who will need to look after arrangements when we leave this part of our lives to enter into the adventure of love and forgiveness the Lord has for us.

Resist being like the disciples in today’s Gospel. An open ear to Jesus’ words and choosing to think about our gateway into eternal life is an option he would like us to take. I leave you with the thought. Thanks.



## DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

### ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

#### Pope Francis on a heart open to the whole world

If the conviction that all human beings are brothers and sisters is not to remain an abstract idea but to find concrete embodiment, then numerous related issues emerge, forcing us to see things in a new light and to develop new responses.

Complex challenges arise when our neighbour happens to be an immigrant. Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided, this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development. Yet until substantial progress is made in achieving this goal, we are obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families, and where they can find personal fulfilment. Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarised by four words; welcome, protect, promote and integrate. For it is not a case of implementing welfare programmes from the top down, but rather of undertaking a journey together, through these four actions, in order to build cities and countries that, while preserving their respective cultural and religious identity, are open to differences and know how to promote them in the spirit of human fraternity.

This implies taking certain indispensable steps, especially in response to those who are fleeing grave humanitarian crises.

**- Fratelli tutti paras 128-130**