



SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER 2021

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

30th Sunday of the Year (B) : Mark 10: 46-52

I was unimpressed when I heard of architects being made to drive themselves round inside their buildings in wheelchairs. So often the requirements of individuals with specific needs can be overlooked. We don't stand in their shoes.

Wheelchair users and all people with anything we class as disability have a lot to teach the able-bodied among us. A social worker working with disabled people and himself a wheelchair user, unflatteringly called the rest of us 'walkie-talkies' - a sign of his frustration with our lack of understanding and care. Think before being offended.

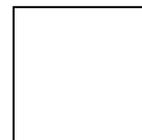
Today's Gospel names an individual, Bartimaeus, who is blind. No doubt he developed his own ways of getting about and seeking help - he had to. Finding that Jesus was within hearing distance he began to shout to gain his attention. There was no way he was going to miss the chance of meeting the healer whose reputation was raising the hopes and longing of all people struggling with handicaps.

Please notice that well-intentioned folks in the story told Bartimaeus off because he was shouting and causing a scene. People with no experience of the restrictions and limitations of blindness. Thankfully the blind man was able to fight his corner - he was used to it. Sadly, the otherwise presumably good people wanted to stop a blind man's best chance of meeting Jesus. Who in the story was really blind?

Many people, desperate to attract attention to their plight, are labelled disruptive and worse by others who don't understand, who don't experience what they want to silence. It's a common occurrence. In this Gospel story Jesus intervened. He still does, through those prepared to listen and interpret attention-seeking behaviour. 'Jesus people' ask what they can do to help. Rather than not wanting to know, today's disciples are required to give recognition to people used to being ignored.

The first thing the no longer blind Bartimaeus saw was the face of Jesus. It's the purpose of all sight. When the scales are taken from our eyes we too will perceive the presence of the Lord in unlikely places and surprising individuals.

Bartimaeus' sight gave him the ability to 'follow Jesus along the road' - he wanted to know more. By intervening we discover how much we have to learn. Wouldn't it be great if a blind person helped us to see? Thanks Bart.



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The mind of Pope Francis

I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organisations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation". All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.

The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work. Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity.

- Laudato Si paras 14 and 18