



SUNDAY 25 AUGUST 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

Twenty First Sunday of the Year (B) : John 6: 60-69

Paul is a good friend. He doesn't read music. To him, a page of sheet music is a load of squiggles and marks on a grid of lines. Others can look at the same sheet and hear the tune. Debbie manages her money very well, but algebra and quadratic equations are Einstein's province and as unhelpful to her as Egyptian hieroglyphs.

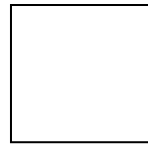
Much of what makes the world turn, what we rely on for life, is beyond our knowledge and our comprehension. The technology we trust hasn't been available very long. The universe is still expanding. Science, medicine, engineering and any discipline you can imagine are growing and testing the limits of received wisdom every day. Boundaries are but moving targets enticing us to find out more.

It's no surprise that when the God of love became one of us, he's going to do and say some challenging things. Why do we all feel, even if only occasionally, that we know better, that God should come round to our own point of view? Some things make such clear and good sense that we feel surely the Lord ought to see it!

It can be tempting to want to freeze history, to settle for what we think now and not want things to shift further. But God still has more to say and more to give. Jesus the teacher wants us not to stop being his students - that's what 'disciples' means, after all. His provocative language about giving his flesh for the life of the world is meant to shake us up, to ask question. Accepting the mystery and wonder of his teaching should drive us to want to find out more.

It means coming back for the next lesson, seeking what our mates think. A good test of whether we understand something or not can be measured by how well we can explain it to someone else. Being taught by God may be demanding, but there can be no greater adventure if we're prepared to journey into new territories and discover that the Kingdom of God has no end.

Simon Peter didn't necessarily understand all Jesus' teaching but he knew there was and is no one better. So he stays to find out more. He'd never met anyone like Jesus. It's a no brainer. We learn by staying with the enormity of what Jesus gives in the hope that we glimpse more about being fed, about Communion with God and one another, and about how limited we can be if we're not careful. Hang in. Keep coming back.



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Pope Francis on complex life today

What is called for is an evangelization capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values. It must reach the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed, bringing the word of Jesus to the inmost soul of our cities. Cities are multicultural; in the larger cities, a connective network is found in which groups of people share a common imagination and dreams about life, and new human interactions arise, new cultures, invisible cities. Various subcultures exist side by side, and often practise segregation and violence. The Church is called to be at the service of a different dialogue. On the one hand, there are people who have the means needed to develop their personal and family lives, but there are also many 'non-citizens', 'half citizens' and 'urban remnants'.

Cities create a sort of permanent ambivalence because, while they offer their residents countless possibilities, they also present many people with any number of obstacles to the full development of their lives. This contrast causes painful suffering. In many parts of the world, cities are the scene of mass protests where thousands of people call for freedom, a voice in public life, justice and a variety of other demands which, if not properly understood, will not be silenced by force.

- *The Joy of the Gospel - para 74*