



SUNDAY 26 APRIL 2020  
DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

**3rd Sunday of Easter (A): Luke 24: 13-35**

Is it too blunt to admit we're occasionally glad to see the back of some people? But if you've ever said, "Don't go. Stay with us!" it's a tell-tale sign of something good happening and you want more.

Today's Gospel tells us of the risen Jesus choosing to intercept two people on the road to Emmaus who shared their story with the 'stranger' who'd joined them. They were heartbroken and bewildered. In reply, Jesus the stranger told them his story, unravelling the deep history and significance of what they described as the recent happenings in Jerusalem. It was the same story - told from two completely different standpoints.

We're often left mystified by life's upheavals. Our feeling response and our questions to which we have no adequate answers can drive us to rehearse our confusion and pain over and over in conversations with friends. It's part of how we eventually accommodate irreplaceable loss. We may feel angry that God seems not to see things the way we do - and we feel that he should. Well-meaning words fall short. Others don't understand.

In the Emmaus story, Jesus enters the pain of the two disciples and takes them with him on a journey of discovery. The meeting on the road carries a wonderful irony in the words of the disciples, "You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days." This stranger certainly knows - it's been happening to him. And so, it's he who begins to enthral them so that their 'hearts burned within them' as he explained the Scriptures. So when they get to Emmaus and he makes to leave, they implore him to stay.

Jesus' story is our story. He asks us to carry the cross if we are to be his disciples. Making his story our own opens up our understanding and hopefully helps us to have insight into what's going on in our lives. Identifying with Jesus is more than just words.

The stranger often walks with us, and like the two on the road, we don't recognise him. He's ready to join and stay with us. We may be seldom as ready to stay with him. Being an attentive listener is harder than our urge to talk a lot. We need to ask Jesus to read the Scriptures to us. To open out the stories so that we see and hear, perhaps for the first time, how the God who speaks is speaking personally to us.

The identity of the stranger became clear at table. Our Gospel reading today ends with the memorable phrase 'they recognised him at the breaking of bread' - that's early Church speak for Eucharist. It's where we recognise him also, but in the first part of our Mass the Scriptures are read to us. Begin to see what's happening here so that routine and habit don't rob us of hearing the Lord speaking to us before bread is broken at the table and we are nourished again by his presence. We are always on the road to Emmaus.



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**Remember**

*May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.*

*May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.*

*May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.*

*May we who have the flexibility to care for children when their schools close remember those who have no options.*

*May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.*

*May we who are losing our spare money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.*

*May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.*

*As fear grips our country, let us choose love.*

*During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.*

*Amen*