



SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2023

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

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## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

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### **Christ the King of the Universe (A): Matthew 25: 31-46**

We know Darren had been something of a tearaway in his younger days. Occasionally one of his stories would rehearse some of his history and colourful episodes would emerge. He didn't mind his friends knowing his background. He knew we all loved him anyway.

As a teenager he'd been in a gang and got caught up in defending a territory his gang claimed as theirs. Feuds and strained relationships all played their part in untidy legends that seemed never to diminish. Point-scoring and wars of words endure to this day. Loving your enemies was too much of a stretch. Thankfully, he was trying to create alternative ways of accepting difference without losing face. Building acceptable alliances requires a deeper adherence to solidarity's first principles. We share a common humanity. We need one another's strengths.

The history of God's people is full of clashes of many different stripes. In Jesus' world, tribes had something of a corporate personality. Wounds and bruises, strengths and successes, none were forgotten; memories were important and could be exaggerated. You were known by who your father was and your grandparents were. Family ties defined your identity but carried expectations, there were always strings attached.

Into all this, the source and origin of all life, our loving God, chose to enter his world and ours as one of us. One of our new prayers puts it that God bound himself to our human family with a bond so tight that it can never be undone. Jesus loved, sang, ate, learnt, taught, wept, bled and died for us. They knew him as a man, a gifted and amazing human being, before his real pedigree became known. He referred to himself as Son of Man, talked of anyone who does the will of his Father in heaven is thereby his mother, sister and brother (*Matthew 12: 48-50*).

His life is a profound sermon on love, on service and compassion. Meeting human need, showcasing human care, was his teaching and example. So intrinsically involved that he's able to assert that in so far as we feed, quench, care for, visit and clothe anyone, we do it to him. On this we'll be judged.

Or God has woven himself into our story. He wants to share his life with us as he shares ours. Living within us he makes us the outer wrappings of God's presence. It's an awesome privilege and responsibility. Our God reigns - in us. That's today's challenge.



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*Pope Francis again on Climate Change*

It is not possible to conceal the correlation of global climate phenomena and the accelerated increase in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly since the mid-twentieth century. The overwhelming majority of scientists specializing in the climate support this correlation, and only a very small percentage of them seek to deny the evidence. Regrettably, the climate crisis is not exactly a matter that interests the great economic powers, whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in the shortest amount of time.

I feel obliged to make these clarifications, which may appear obvious, because of certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church. Yet we can no longer doubt that the reason for the unusual rapidity of these dangerous changes is a fact that cannot be concealed: the enormous novelties that have to do with unchecked human intervention on nature in the past two centuries. Events of natural origin that usually cause warming, such as volcanic eruptions and others, are insufficient to explain the proportion and speed of the changes to recent decades. The change in average surface temperatures cannot be explained except as the result of the increase of greenhouse gases.

- *Laudate Deum* paras 13 and 14