



SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 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

Twenty Sixth Sunday of the Year (B) : Mark 9: 38-43, 45, 47-48

Jesus' world was so big. His vision of God's Kingdom extravagant and cosmic. His followers needed time to grasp how daring and detailed was the love he described and lived. We still have the same need.

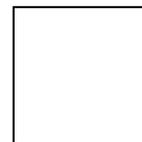
Have you ever had the experience of someone giving, doing, arranging or accompanying you way beyond your expectations, beyond what you felt you deserved and even wondered if it were true and would it last? Was there ulterior motive, strings attached, could anything be so freely gratuitous, so different from the way of the world, so devoid of small print? There's nothing as scary as unconditional love. Some people hesitate in believing it's how God loves them.

Jesus was a free man. He spoke with and respected the womenfolk of his time. He was great with kids and superb with sick people and the worried and distressed. He stood up for the poor and the vulnerable and spoke out against oppression and exploitation, against greed and two-faced lawyers. There was power in his compassion. He was unafraid of the hassle he got from the authorities. Driving out demons was the classic signal of goodness overcoming evil and his forgiveness takes us into the heart of our loving God.

But what a teacher! The clarity of his exaggerated examples hammers home a big message - cutting off hands, feet and poking out eyes is stark. His contemporaries didn't take it literally and we don't, but the blunt message to correct evil tendencies hopefully remains.

Lest we afford ourselves medals for doing God's work, today's Gospel shows an episode of his followers trying to stop someone casting out devils because he wasn't part of the group! Cliques and exclusiveness among Jesus' disciples do great harm, be they in parishes or elsewhere. The disciples saw someone who wasn't one of them - Jesus saw one less demon in the world and rejoiced that a man was released from the crippling distortions of evil and restored to wholeness and his family. Well meaning individuals can get things wrong. It's a sobering and important message.

Can we ask the Lord to free us from pretensions and help us to not get in his way, no matter how well intended we may be. Study Jesus - his lessons never cease.



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

Pope Francis

In some areas of our cities, there is still a lively sense of neighbourhood. Each person quite spontaneously perceives a duty to accompany and help his or her neighbour. In places where these community values are maintained, people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity. The neighbourhood gives them a sense of shared identity. Would that neighbouring countries were able to encourage a similar neighbourly spirit between their peoples! Yet the spirit of individualism also affects relations between countries. The danger of thinking that we have to protect ourselves from one another, of viewing others as competitors or dangerous enemies, also affects relations between peoples in the same region. Perhaps we were trained in this kind of fear and mistrust.

There are powerful countries and large businesses that profit from this isolation and prefer to negotiate with each country separately. On the other hand, small or poor countries can sign agreements with their regional neighbours that will allow them to negotiate as a bloc and thus avoid being cut off, isolated and dependent on the great powers. Today, no state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated.

Fratelli Tutti - paras 152-153