



SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2022

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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### 22nd Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 14: 1, 7-14

So who said Jesus didn't have a sense of humour? Poking fun at the Pharisees seeking the best places of honour at table and suggesting they might want to try a better way if they want to get noticed. It's a Jewish brand of craftiness. It would bring a broad grin to the faces of street folks.

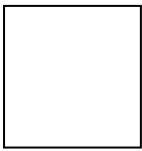
Humour can be a useful way to differ with an opposing opinion. Feature writers and political commentators field some clever lines to get their point over, to say nothing about stand-up comedians. Used skilfully, humour can disarm without inflaming things further. Crude and caustic comment is unacceptable.

But where are we in the Gospel story today? We're not onlookers or bystanders, rubbernecking at others getting their comeuppance. There's a personal question here about how much we like to be noticed and do we subtly or more openly seek admiration and applause. How do we think of ourselves? Are we aware that we can caricature ourselves as easily as we can others? We shouldn't assume we are as self-aware as we like to think we are. We can also run ourselves down mercilessly. Do we want to look in the mirror and see beyond appearances? Do we want to identify why we do things and the manner in which we do them?

Let's go back to Jesus. In Jewish society at the time, honour and status were very important. The family name and reputation mattered hugely. But the ego can quickly be inflated and unwritten power games take over. The Lord's ability to effectively name what's going on at this meal punctures their barely hidden posturing. They've been caught out. He's playing their game with a smile on his face. What drives them is far from the values of God's kingdom.

He has a message for the calculating host of this set-up. Why these particular guests? How important is it to want to be seen with A, B and C, to be in the company of X, Y and Z? Tell you what - at God's table you'll find the poor, people struggling with disabilities, individuals who are overlooked and crowds of men, women and kids who in the eyes of the movers and shakers, in the world of the status seekers, they're the people who don't count. Our God loves their company.

To learn from Jesus, to understand better the hospitality of God, we invite those who can't pay us back or return a favour. In the world of crippling costs, of foodbanks and fuel poverty, can we insulate ourselves from our neighbours, sisters and brothers? God joined us in our humanity to show us how to live, helping us to see that loving our neighbour as ourselves is an undisguised benchmark of how we really love God. A chastening episode took place in today's Gospel story. We're all guests of God. What else do we want to prove? Can you laugh at yourself? Friends, we all have feet of clay.



**More of Pope Francis talking of The Mass**

"I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation." (Evangelii gaudium , n. 27). I want this so that all can be seated at the Supper of the sacrifice of the Lamb and live from Him.

Before our response to his invitation – well before! - there is his desire for us. We may not even be aware of it, but every time we go to Mass, the first reason is that we are drawn there by his desire for us. For our part, the possible response—which is also the most demanding asceticism - is, as always, that surrender to this love, that letting ourselves be drawn by him. Indeed, every reception of communion of the Body and Blood of Christ was already desired by him in the Last Supper.

The content of the bread broken is the cross of Jesus, his sacrifice of obedience out of love for the Father. If we had not had the Last Supper, that is to say, if we had not had the ritual anticipation of his death, we would have never been able to grasp how the carrying out of his being condemned to death could have been in fact *the* act of perfect worship, pleasing to the Father, the only true act of worship, the only true liturgy. Only a few hours after the Supper, the apostles could have seen in the cross of Jesus, if they could have borne the weight of it, what it meant for Jesus to say, "body offered", "blood poured out." It is this of which we make memorial in every Eucharist. When the Risen One returns from the dead to break bread for the disciples at Emmaus, and for his disciples who had gone back to fishing for fish and not for people on the Sea of Galilee, that gesture of breaking the bread opens their eyes. It heals them from the blindness inflicted by the horror of the cross, and it renders them capable of "seeing" the Risen One, of believing in the Resurrection.

- ***Apostolic Letter (Desiderio Desideravi) paras 5-7***