



SUNDAY 28 MAY 2023

# DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

### Pentecost Sunday (A): John 20:19-23

“It’s a great comfort when you’re unsure and needing support and someone you trust turns up, bringing reassurance, even safety. You’re no longer on your own. It may be the friend helps you find your own resourcefulness or has a perspective you don’t have that alters the issue. Either way, new possibilities show the next step and you’re not walking solo any more”.

That was Ben, a neighbour with unenviable health issues, talking to me last week. He was in a reflective mood and let slip that he regularly writes poetry - or attempts to pull words together, fashion descriptions or articulate his feelings. It didn’t seem right to ask if I could see some of his work but his mention of it suggested that a positive response from me might make sight of his writing likely before too long.

Our Gospels strive to capture for us something of the experience of Jesus and his message. Today’s passage is a brief and pretty condensed account of a scared group of apostles in a live trauma. Their Master has been put to death, executed publically. They fear they’ll be rounded up and may face a similar fate. If you let your imagination run with the story, well .... you wouldn’t want to be there.

Then Jesus appears. He brings peace - repeating the gift because they needed to feel it. We’re invited to imagine the relief and the difference his presence made. How long did the meeting last? What questions did they ask him? Were they in tears? Did they feel overwhelmed? The Gospel simply says they were filled with joy. You bet they were tearful and pretty exhausted.

But Jesus brings an enduring gift - the Spirit, the living wind of God’s breath to be with them, to identify for them the strengths Jesus had seen in them when he chose them. He’s now going to be working with them in a different way, sending them as the Father had sent him, to preach emphatically an unassailable love that forgives like no other, a message of inclusion and welcome beyond anything that can possibly be earned.

The Gospel passage hints, like Ben’s attempts at poetry probably does, at worlds of connections, feelings and images tumbling over each other. God’s spirit is here, in you and me. We’re being sent out by Jesus, personally, charged with the exciting and awesome responsibility to explore what it means to love and affirm life everywhere and to mend and restore where possible.

My neighbour Ben, whether aware of it or not, has clearly met the Lord under cover of his reassuring friends. Just like you and I have too.

May the Spirit lead you to be a grace to others, and often.



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ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

### **Pope Francis: Climate Change and the poor**

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.

- *Laudato Si para 25*