



# SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2024

## DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

### ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year (B) Mark 9:38-43, 47-48**

“You’re not listening to me”, the man said. I was a bit taken aback and protested. I was listening. Maybe because I didn’t agree with him, he assumed I hadn’t paid sufficient attention.

It bothered me later and prompted a kind of examination of conscience. Was he right? Had I honestly taken in what he said? Was I really listening or just thought I was? Did he read a lack of interest in my face? Did I really engage or perhaps only give him a perfunctory nod and not followed through?

Maybe I’m in good company here - Jesus’ disciples appear not to have understood when Jesus was speaking to them. Their minds weren’t taking in his message. Does that mean they weren’t listening? It seems they didn’t really want to know. Had they zoned out?

Our Gospel says he’s instructing them. Get this - he’s going to die. They’re his followers, they need to understand what following him means. Leadership is about being a servant. He needs to spell it out because they’re arguing about who among them is the greatest. So, care for the vulnerable, learn from the kids, no task is beneath you, give where it’s needed. Don’t stop others doing good - they don’t need your permission. Be inclusive, keep learning and understand hospitality. Helping anyone is the same as welcoming Jesus and his Father. Are you listening? Really listening? Because this is mind-blowing.

Get rid of what gets in the way. You might smile or be puzzled by his graphic remedies - cutting off hands and feet etc are exaggerations, but how radical does he have to get for us to take notice? Many an amputation has saved a life.

Am I listening? Are you? We need to think before answering.



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### **Pope Francis on courage to be compassionate**

Look at Jesus. His deep compassion reached out to others. It did not make him hesitant, timid or self-conscious, as often happens with us. Quite the opposite. His compassion made him go out actively to preach and to send others on a mission of healing and liberation. Let us acknowledge our weakness, but allow Jesus to lay hold of it and send us too on mission. We are weak, yet we hold a treasure that can enlarge us and make those who receive it better and happier. Boldness and apostolic courage are an essential part of mission.

We need the Spirit’s prompting, lest we be paralysed by fear and excessive caution, lest we grow used to keeping within safe bounds. Let us remember that closed spaces grow musty and unhealthy. When the Apostles were tempted to let themselves be crippled by danger and threats, they joined in prayer. “And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness” (Acts 4:29). As a result, “when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

**- Rejoice and Be Glad - paras 131 and 133**