



SUNDAY 30 JULY 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

17th Sunday of the year (A): Matthew 13: 44-52

“Do you ever do anything about it? Does it make a difference?” Jack was blunt. In your face blunt. He was asking us in his customary direct style about the readings at Mass.

He was honest about himself. He was interested sometimes, intrigued occasionally and could feel challenged. But he seldom thought about the readings after Mass was over and, hand on heart, couldn't say they made much practical difference. He felt guilty about it. So did we.

We talked about favorite passages from the Scriptures and whether they inspired us to make any changes in the way we live. Again none of us scored highly. We pondered on any memorable homilies and sermons we may or may not recall and generally gave ourselves a yellow card. We agreed that the way the Scriptures were read to us increased or lessened our attention to the message. If we were an example of the congregation's interest in general then we have a problem.

Jesus has no illusions about this. He told stories because we don't usually get it. We can be interested, enthralled even, but not make the story our own. He must have been frustrated and he showed it at times. All teachers experience the same issues - how their teaching is received by people whose minds and interests are elsewhere can be very wearing.

Today's stories, given to us by Gospel writers who retained or gathered memories of Jesus' style, give us examples of individuals who flogged off all they owned to buy something of great value to them. Would I ever do that? Would you? We're being told that God's way of thinking, modelled by Jesus, is that important - if we choose to see it that way. If we don't, then like sorting out a catch of fish, the quality of our lives will show clearly enough.

So what do we do? What does a teacher do? Do we discuss this amongst ourselves, see what others think, find different ways of understanding the lesson? If we are sufficiently interested in the speaker, do we give our attention to what the speaker has to say? If we know that the speaker - it's Jesus, of course - loves us and cares greatly about our quality of life and our attitude to others, do we drop all else to take heed of what he shares with us?

We come back Jack's blunt questions. Will it be different next week? In the meantime Jesus keeps telling the stories.



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Pope Francis speaking of politicians

I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots - and not simply the appearances - of the evils in our world! Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. We need to be convinced that charity is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones). I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare. Why not turn to God and ask him to inspire their plans? I am firmly convinced that openness to the transcendent can bring about a new political and economic mindset which would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society.

- *The Joy of the Gospel para 205*