



SUNDAY 31 MARCH 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

Easter Sunday (B) : John 20: 1-9

It was shattering. Just imagine someone dear to you, brutally murdered and then his body disappears. The bottom drops out of your world for a second time. Horrible doesn't describe it.

The possibility of resurrection, the Lord who clearly died now being alive again, wasn't a possible explanation of the empty tomb - not at first. Things like that don't happen. The loss of a loved one hurts like mad because they're not coming back. But Jesus did. Raised by the Father, he came to tell his friends that the doors of death have been blown open and they are to tell everyone.

It's still shattering. This re-writes human experience. The apostles are still afraid the authorities will come after them. Taking in the news of the resurrection required the risen Jesus to come among them to help them see he is alive. They're overjoyed. But how does this fit with all they've been brought up to understand - about life, about God, about - well, everything?

Slowly they begin, with the help of God's Spirit, to join up the dots. The messages were trailed and hinted at in their Scriptures, but the leap of imagination and faith to see them can only happen now. The Gospels tell of Jesus talking earlier of resurrection but how were they to understand even the notion? It's foreign to their life experience. Maybe, if we're honest, we may find it difficult to take in too.

We have the knowledge, the information. We know the story well enough to pass it on to others. But how does it sit with you? How do you handle it, deep inside? This is a slow burn, a journey of sitting with the story, being there in the story, feeling it from the inside, seeing it as a participant, not a spectator. We're in a mystery of love. Silence is a requirement.

We can be tempted to fill the void with words. Don't. Let Easter unfold throughout our lives as we sit in wonder and let Jesus teach us through his Spirit. Resist thinking we know the story. We know it partially and in different ways. Head knowledge is essential, yes, but the message must soak right through into our whole outlook.

Being still, taking time to be quiet with the Lord and his story for company may be a challenge - many find silence difficult - but try it. Light a candle if it helps or play quiet music, but he is the Teacher, we the students and the lessons never end.

May the Risen Lord re-write your life and give you joy. Happy Easter.



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The final words of Pope Francis' Laudate Deum

Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern about the unfulfilled responsibilities of the political sectors and indignation at the lack of interest shown by the powerful. Let us realise, then, that even though this does not immediately produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.

If we consider that emissions per individual in the United States are about two times greater than those of individuals living in China, and about seven times greater than the average of the poorest countries, we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long term impact. As a result, along with indispensable political decisions, we would be making progress along the way to genuine care for one another.

"Praise God" is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies.

- Laudate Deum paras 71-73