



SUNDAY 5 MARCH 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

2nd Sunday of the Lent (A): Matthew 17: 1-9

There's no mistaking whose son Alan is - he's a dead ringer for his dad, Vince. You have to smile. He walks the same, laughs just like Vince and they share the same impish sense of humour. If they supported the same football team you might say Alan didn't have a mind of his own. But he's a 21st Century version of his dad, copied and updated. Similar but distinct.

You see it in many areas of life - artists who take and develop the style inherited from their masters and mentors. Musicians develop and thrill us likewise. Craftsmen, actors and film makers, scientists, writers and builders, teachers, thinkers, innovators, parents and preachers copy and then make personal changes taking received wisdom forward.

But how was it with Jesus? We're always faced with the gift and mystery of him being both God and completely human like us. In the story picked up by St Luke and included in his Gospel (*Luke 2: 41-52*) he tells us of 12 year old Jesus going missing after a family time in Jerusalem. He was found after three days in the temple and answered Mary's relieved but emotional "How could you do this to us?" saying he needed to be about his Father's business. What's going on here? Luke is telling us that even as an emerging teenager, he needs to be ramping up his grasp of how his Father operates.

In today's Gospel passage about the Transfiguration, the voice of God the Father declares with delight to the three apostles that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, who they were intrigued, fascinated and taught by, is God's Son, is deeply loved and cherished. The voice doesn't ask 'Do you get it!?' - but the enormity of the revelation wasn't lost on them - they were terrified! Their job, the Father tells them, is not to start building tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, but to listen to Jesus. Get real. Realise now who this is. I'm his Father. He's just like me. Listen to him will you!

We know what God our Father is like because we know and listen to his Son. Jesus tells us 'to have seen me is to have seen the Father' (*John 14:9*) 'the Father and I are one' (*John 10:30*). Like Father, like Son.

Our Scriptures teach us about Jesus so that we can know God our Father in human terms through his Son who is identical to him. Listening requires more than our ears. Our compassionate God asks us to help others as if we're helping him. We need to hear better and regularly. God's Son is just like his Father. Surprised?



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ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

Pope Francis on the special place of the poor in God's people

God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself 'became poor' (2 *Corinthians* 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the 'yes' uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire. The Saviour was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families; he was presented at the Temple along with two turtledoves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb (cf *Luke* 2:24; *Leviticus* 5:7); he was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn bread. When he began to preach the Kingdom, crowds of the dispossessed followed him, illustrating his words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (*Luke* 4:18). He assured those burdened by sorrow and crushed by poverty that God has a special place for them in his heart: "Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God" (*Luke* 6:20); he made himself one of them: "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat", and he taught them that mercy towards all of these is the key to heaven (cf *Matthew* 25:5ff).

God shows the poor his first mercy. This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind ... which was in Jesus Christ" (*Philippians* 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. This option is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. In their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. Put them at the centre of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.

- *The Joy of the Gospel—paras 197 and 198*

Becoming St. Patrick – His Slavery

Margaret Lee invites parishioners from the partnership to a presentation by Eric Foster of his debut historical novel on St. Patrick – commencing after the 6:00pm Mass on Sunday 5th March at St. Mary's Church Hall, Burn Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4HT