



SUNDAY 5 MAY 2024

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

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## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

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### 6th Sunday of Easter (B) : John 15: 9-17

What was Jesus really like? What would you have seen and heard had you been there?

We have the Gospel accounts - attempts to pass on what we need to know in order to develop our friendship with him. But when he looked, smiled, laughed, sang, told stories, how do you think he came across?

It's important because he showed his love for people in many small and large ways and he asked us to love one another as he loved. So we need to study how he did it. Work it out. How was he? How is he now? And how do you and I make his style our own, draw him into ourselves in ways others will notice and get the message?

People have speculated about how he sounded. He spoke to crowds, so did he have a powerful voice? Being a Galilean, he had a rough northern accent, distinct from the Jerusalem twang. Jesus' care for people leaks out all over his well-crafted stories. God's ways are different, they describe what love looks and sounds like. Underdogs are supported, fraudulent ways are exposed and the vulnerable come to know genuine tenderness.

Love has a wide vocabulary of many voices and gestures. It gives time honestly and generously because it's the best gift of all. The simplest and the most powerful can spot the real thing a mile off. When we don't inhabit our words, when our actions and promises are shallow, when we seek to manipulate, then frankly we've lost the plot - and it probably shows.

Jesus embodies the total love of the Father. It may appear effortless or challenging but cannot be counterfeit. Making known to us everything he's learnt from his Father means translating for us who love is, what that looks like so we can spread it liberally everywhere. Jesus chose us. He knows what he's doing. We need to know it too even if it takes a lifetime.

Have you ever sat and enjoyed being loved by God? Try it. God intends us to engage with his love for us. Be warned - there's nothing like it. Love changes everything, as the song goes. It's powerful, delightful and oh, it makes demands.

So when Jesus reminds us 'I chose you and I commissioned you to bear fruit that will last', is there a smile in the eyes and warmth and trust in his voice? Don't let his words sit on the page. Accept them, wrestle with them, play or cry with them, but know you are loved from the dawn of time. So is everyone else. Our job is to prove it as best we can. It's a command. Be gentle with yourself



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**ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP**

**FRUITFULNESS OVER RESULTS**

Apart from their tireless activity, politicians are men and women. They are called to practise love in their daily interpersonal relationships. As persons, they need to consider that the modern world, with its technical advances, tends increasingly to label the satisfaction of human desires, now classified and subdivided among different services. Less and less will people be called by name, less and less will this unique being be treated as a person with his or her own feelings, sufferings, problems, joys and family. Their illnesses will be named only in order to cure them, their financial needs only to provide for them, their lack of a home only to give them lodging, their desires for recreation and entertainment only to satisfy them. Yet it must never be forgotten that loving the most insignificant of human beings as a brother, as if there were no one else in the world but him, cannot be considered a waste of time.

Politics too must make room for a tender love of others. What is tenderness? It is love that draws near and becomes real. A movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and hands.... Tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women. Amid the daily concerns of political life, the smallest, the weakest, the poorest should touch our hearts: indeed, they have a right to appeal to our heart and soul. They are our brothers and sisters, and as such we must love and care for them.

*Fratelli Tutti paras 193 and 194*