



SUNDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2021

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Twenty Third Sunday of the Year (B) : Mark 7: 31-37

Rob notices things that many of us might miss. He spots them because he's deaf and visual clues are prime information.

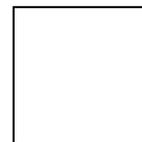
A smile, a grimace is as expressive as a page of words. The power of a gesture can often betray real feelings when the words may be saying something else. Body language is often more immediate. We're a wordy people. If we can decode physical and facial signals we can read people more clearly.

Jesus was a great people watcher. He noticed a man with a withered hand, a widow who put two small coins into a treasury. He remarked that people were meant to see the impressive gear worn by officials, and not to miss those praying at street corners. His concern for the suffering of many must have been matched by his humour at those needing status and applause. Nothing escaped his attention.

He read body language like an open book. So when a man sadly without hearing or speech was brought to him, he spoke clearly by gestures and not in words. His sign language is brilliant. First, he takes the man away from the crowd - he's signalling clearly that the man now has the whole of his attention. Touch is powerful - he puts his fingers into the man's ears. Licking his finger he wets the man's mouth - an odd and daring action. He's giving him speech from his speech. And finally, the look to heaven and a prayer that his hearing and speech be set free. The man knew he was understood, accepted loved and cured.

Jesus' gestures worked for a man where words wouldn't. Thoughtfulness, care and respect required a different language. We are all communicators. We cannot not communicate. Even silence is a message, though perhaps hard to interpret.

As followers of Jesus, note his style and how individual and particular is his engagement with each person - including you and me. Perhaps today's Gospel may prompt or even summon us to examine how clearly or casually we communicate. Whether those receiving our efforts hear and see what we think we're saying or they perceive something else. Our bodies shout messages before our words. The Lord smiles at us. Do we hear what that means?



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

Message from Pope Francis

Joy and Peace

Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption.

We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that 'less is more'. A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack.

This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.

- *Laudato Si* - para 222