



SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2022

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

32nd Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 20: 27-38

We were having a conversation about the Government. Who doesn't? I was impressed that it was a conversation and not an argument. There was plenty of feeling about pat answers given by some politicians, departments or organisations—as if that solved the problem. Often it was insufficient and at times carried an air of superiority. Real listening and soundbites sit uneasily together. Remember the old joke about if you want to get to X, you wouldn't start from here.

Albert Einstein left a much quoted note about our being unable to solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them. It certainly seemed relevant to our conversation. Shelf-worn solutions don't usually remedy critical human need. Administrative and bureaucratic answers are no substitute for forensic pastoral actions. Complex human predicaments cannot be reduced to simple descriptions. Entrenched and fixed thinking infuriates its casualties. The inability to learn, to think outside the box, only makes for repetition in ever diminishing or increasing circles.

Jesus attempted to broaden the awareness of scribes and Pharisees, the legal and defensive minds that could split hairs, read the small print and miss the big issues. In today's Gospel story he engages with Sadducees, a small, conservative and wealthy group of people who rejected any notion of resurrection from the dead. Their thinking was stuck, envisaging life after death as a continuation of how we live now. Their rigid thinking was based on false premisses. Their attempts at ridicule betraying wrong-headed understanding.

The tragic, potty story they present to Jesus displays their inadequate appreciation of the revealed word of God. We hear Luke's account of Jesus' response. I like what the Gospel of Mark has the Lord saying. "Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?" In other words your narrow thinking fastens you into a limited, earth-bound view of life.

Resurrection shatters common sense. God fits no comfortable definition. Our God of love treasures his creation and wastes nothing. Jesus craves our company and asks the same of us in return. Separation is not in the blueprint. What we've done or not done never reduces his love and mercy and the final chapter of our lives and of creation is reunion. We've just celebrated the communion of saints—the family tree of all God's people. Life is more final than death. When we meet total love we won't want it to end—and it doesn't!



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Pope Francis on the unity within creation

When we speak of the 'environment', what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. Recognising the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.

We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

- *Laudato Si para 139*