



SUNDAY 8 MAY 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

### 4th Sunday of Easter (C) : John 10: 27-30

Love songs, poetry and music all make the attempt. How do we express being close to another person? There were tears in Peter's eyes and his voice was breaking. He was trying to express what his wife Madge, meant to him. She had died a few weeks earlier. His face and hands were saying more than his struggling words.

Pete says Madge wasn't perfect but they'd worked at their relationship over the years, knocking back selfishness, not always getting it right - no one does. But the emphatic experience of being affirmed, the sense of belonging to each other, the joint consequences of individual behaviour and their patient striving to work together for their family and many others, had been a stand-out witness of what love looks like. Others noticed and had said so.

Love takes us into mystery. It's a gift and it's a demanding one. We are a gift to Jesus from the Father. Working together with him, we share Jesus' life as he shared ours. Hopefully we learn over and over the implications of who we are with Jesus the God who unites himself with us. He requires we listen to his voice. He knows us. He has no illusions about us. Our task in following him should mean we're learning all the while. Peter would jokingly talk of Madge knowing him inside out and requiring him to listen to what she said.

We're formed by relationships. We bring the gift of ourselves. Jesus reminds us that he and the Father are one. You can't get a closer relationship. His experience of how we might express our bonding with him has an astounding start in his sharing our human life. He talks of us as a gift that can't be stolen. We're his now. Belonging completely to him without losing our freedom.

In the love of God we are receivers. We are cherished, safe, cared for and cared about. From Jesus, we have his love and that of his Father and the Holy Spirit. He's responsible for us, thinks endlessly about us and wants dearly for us to grow. He believes in us. He asks that we follow him, taking us beyond ourselves into sharing God's life.

Before we get too immersed in the heady delights of being so loved, the demands of intimacy mean that we become close enough to one who loves us for us to want to change. We're not just receivers, but in gratitude we too become givers. We should stand out as lover, serving through difficulty and to death. To love means to live forever.

Today's Gospel reading is very short. It's over too quickly. It must be read several times to even get the gist. Do it, please.



DIOCESE Hexham & Newcastle

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP

### Take notes from the Pope

Luke does not speak of poverty 'of spirit' but simply of those who are poor (*cf Luke 6:20*). In this way, he too invites us to live a plain and austere life. He calls us to share in the life of those most in need, the life lived by the Apostles, and ultimately to configure ourselves to Jesus who, though rich, made himself poor (*2 Corinthians 8:9*). Being poor of heart; that is holiness. "*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth*".

These are strong words in a world that from the beginning has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides, where we constantly pigeonhole others on the basis of their ideas, their customs and even their way of speaking or dressing. Ultimately, it is the reign of pride and vanity, where each person thinks he or she has the right to dominate others. Nonetheless, impossible as it may seem, Jesus proposes a different way of doing things; the way of meekness. This is what we see him doing with his disciples. It is what we contemplate on his entrance to Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey. (*Matthew 21:5; Zechariah 9:9*).

Christ says, 'Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (*Matthew 11:29*). If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. Saint Therese of Lisieux tell us that 'perfect charity consists in putting up with others' mistakes, and not being scandalised by their faults'.

**- Rejoice and Be Glad - paras 70 - 72**