



SUNDAY 9 JANUARY 2022

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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### The Baptism of the Lord (c) : Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22

Benny was talking to me about the day he made the decision to move jobs. It was an important choice and he'd sweated over it for some time. "The moment I made the choice - or rather, it was kind of made for me", he smiled, "I knew it was right".

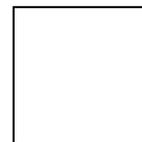
There are defining moments for all of us that stick in our minds and our memories of making commitments that have consequences. For some, it was saying yes to a lifetime choice, not just to marry, but who to marry. Awareness of a possible vocation call may accompany or bother us for some time, years even. But one day our whole self shifts gears, makes a phone call, writes a letter, speaks words we can't or don't take back. The rest, literally, may be history.

Affirmation and a boost from others can steer us. We hear and read the signals and it gives direction to what happens next. Years later we recall times that determined a course of action - a moment of insight, a realisation, a breakthrough that narrowed or widened possibilities and gave shape to who and how we are.

Today's Gospel tells of a moment, a happening that thrilled and empowered Jesus of Nazareth, builder, carpenter, a man skilled with his hands. He came for baptism to cousin John. It was unnecessary, but he's showing solidarity with struggling humanity. The heavens opened - not with rain, but he was showered with the total love and approval of the Father of life. A brilliant kickstart to him going public, driven by love of us all.

Jesus is being God through the limitations of a human mind and the physical restrictions of time, space and energy. He spends himself, buoyed up by the Holy Spirit of love. We too now share the same Spirit. The man Jesus served, gave, challenged, taught and invited us to make seminal choices, offering a love we need to copy from him, for those clearly in need of knowing their inestimable worth.

The Gospel accounts capture this formative start to Jesus' ministry among us. Your memorable times, days when you know your world took an important step, may need interpreting as part of God's mysterious hand and may yet have more to say to you. Respect your personal stories, warts and all. There'll be gold in there somewhere.



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### Pope Francis on the common good

In the face of many petty forms of politics focussed on immediate interests, I would repeat that true statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. Political powers do not find it easy to assume this duty in the work of nation-building, much less in forging a common project for the human family, now and in the future. Thinking of those who will come after us does not serve electoral purposes, yet it is what authentic justice demands. As the Bishops of Portugal have taught, the earth is lent to each generation, to be handed on to the generation that follows.

Global society is suffering from grave structural deficiencies that cannot be resolved by piecemeal solutions or quick fixes. Much needs to change, through fundamental reform and major renewal. Only a healthy politics, involving the most diverse sectors and skills, is capable of overseeing this process. An economy that is an integral part of a political, social, cultural and popular programme directed to the common good could pave the way for different possibilities which do not involve stifling human creativity and its ideals of progress, but rather directing that energy along new channels.

- *Fratelli Tutti paras 178-179*