



SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER 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

28th Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 17: 11-19

My grandmother used to read tealeaves. In the days before teabags, the loose tea you put into the teapot before the boiling water inevitably left tea leaves in your cup after you'd drunk your tea. Reading the patterns left was a horoscope-type activity she did for fun. Predictions weren't to be taken seriously.

She could never have forecast some of the remarkable events that life throws up for us all, nor is it likely our reactions could be detailed accurately. We bob and weave through umpteen things every week, unable to fathom the deeper conundrums and mysteries we experience as we continue to make our best response. To do something or nothing says much about us, especially if the rules are unclear or the stakes are high.

Are we 'glass half-full' or 'half empty' individuals, givers or takers, action people or procrastinators? Take the lid off any family or community and our approaches to life's untidiness expose patterns of human strength and frailty. Our needs are our teachers, the help we seek or provide is woven into the mysterious presence of God within and among us.

Illness is a great leveller. Jesus' time on earth contrasts sharply with our NHS provision today. Leprosy was a horrible, disfiguring affliction that isolated its sufferers. Rejected by those once close, feared by those demanding your distance, your only company those suffering the same abandonment.

Jesus hugged the untouchable, liberated them from their disease and restored them to their families and the temple. But in this story of 10 who were healed, only one came back. I assume the others were so overcome by their recovery, so in-the-moment that thanks would come later. We've all been in predicaments where only later did it dawn that we forget to express thanks. Thank you cards can signal a quiet apology as well as belated and genuine gratitude.

Serious surveys and studies have been done on Gratitude. It's the door to how we feel about so many of the values we espouse. We live indebted to a God who loves us through life and beyond death, including that of his incarnate Son. Our thanks can speak more powerfully from our body language and tone of voice than from the simple words.

To the Lord and one another we can say with Will Shakespeare "I can no other answer make but thanks and thanks, and ever thanks". (Twelfth Night, Act 111).



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Pope Francis' Appeal

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us: he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognise, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the suffering of the excluded.

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organisations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated, "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation". All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvement and talents.

- ***Laudato Si paras 13 and 14***