



SUNDAY 26 JUNE 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

13th Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 9: 51-62

Whatever plane you're on, it's off course for much of the flight! Apparently, as well as travelling in the accepted air corridors and in the general direction of your destination, the plane's onboard computers are constantly making adjustments to get you safely to where you're going.

Life skills are about making adjustments. We hold general aspirations and operate well-worn habits to get us through the day. But life throws up unexpected calls on our abilities for us to find appropriate responses. Often this involves other individuals. We'll not know our capabilities unless challenged. The quote attributed to Bob Marley runs, "You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have".

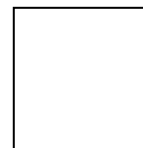
In today's Gospel Jesus challenges well-meaning individuals who want to follow him - we can include ourselves here. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and is not coming back. He's not disposed to collude with good intentions that carry conditions. To follow him is not in the first place about going anywhere except inside ourselves. He reminds us that our duty is to spread the news of the Kingdom of God. We have to establish and keep refreshing this mindset.

So how do we do that? How do we understand what it is? He rebukes James and John who want to call down fire on a Samaritan village - these lads are still learning - this is not God's way. Unless we have some heartfelt notion of how good, loving and forgiving, our God is to us then Kingdom values may be jargon we haven't translated for ourselves. Our task and duty is to love one another as he loves us. Full stop. We have a thousand ways to do this.

It involves treating others as we'd like to be treated. It includes going the extra mile, turning the other cheek, biting our tongue, smiling, feeding, welcoming and serving. It's not optional and it's 24/7 for life.

We need to work on ourselves first. Back to the plane journey. In the safety routine given before take off, we're all required to put our own lifejacket on first before helping others. Sort ourselves out so we can help others to get sorted according to their need. Their needs define our ministry. The world may be in a mess, but God so loves this world that he sent his only Son to us. We're now his disciples, needing to embrace our aspirations, walk the talk and steer our course daily. Jesus relies on us and believes in us. Our lives must redeem these times.

It's good to remind ourselves of our brief. Connect it to when doing our teeth, putting shoes on. When looking in the mirror you're looking at a disciple. Remind yourself so that when others see us they know they're looking at one too. Follow close - you see more than.



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Pope Francis talking about the parish

The parish is not an outdated institution. Precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.

While certainly not the only institution which evangelises, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters'.

This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few.

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

- The Joy of the Gospel para 28