



SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 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

20th Sunday of the Year (C) : Luke 12: 49-53

Wearing sunglasses and with hats pulled down fore and aft we looked suspiciously like a group plotting something we shouldn't. The fine weather had brought a few old pals together.

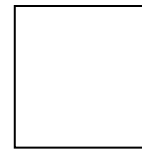
You know how it goes when we start putting the world to right. Plenty of characters come in for criticism and suggestions as to what should happen and who should do the heavy lifting. The Church doesn't escape either; few topics and people got away unscathed. We eventually got to talking personal commitments and soberly became more honest about what difference we each could and were making,

Jesus talks about bringing fire to the earth and wishes it were blazing already! We had to agree there weren't enough times when we were fired up - really fired up. Grumbling has its place if it leads to action. Letting off steam is OK but can that energy be harnessed and directed to achieving something looking more like progress? Are we spectators or participants, onlookers or agents with interest and abilities? The Gospels grew out of the early Christians confronting major issues. Conflict is a necessary part of the Christian life. Peace is no peace if it's not wanting to know or to be involved with important issues.

Many avoid addressing controversial subjects or discussing with others face to face. Having an alternative view can be aired respectfully, risking the possibility of actually learning something. The fire in the belly Jesus talks about is a challenge to personal comfort and to not wanting to rock the boat. Boats need rocking. Leaders and followers need to be held to account. Justifying inadequacy doesn't solve problems.

Followers of Jesus - you and I, for example - are on a steep learning curve and that's for all time. Being resigned to ill-fitting compromises or wordy put-offs might avoid unpleasant tensions but we're called to living a love that took Jesus to the Cross. We're not expected to design a trouble-free existence, fitting God into a pious devotional picture that withholds demands. God loved the world so much that he became human to show us how to love it too. It means taking issue with all that is alien to kingdom thinking and living for the dignity of individuals.

What do you get passionate about? What puts a fire under you and galvanises you into action? Bring that Spirit into your everyday existence. Disagree gracefully but seek first the Kingdom of God. Your example will inspire others. Don't be afraid. Thanks.



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Pope Francis on praying for others

Prayer of supplication is an expression of a heart that trusts in God and realises that of itself it can do nothing. The life of God's faithful people is marked by constant supplication born of faith-filled love and great confidence. Let us not downplay prayer of petition, which so often calms our hearts and helps us persevere in hope. Prayer of intercession has particular value, for it is an act of trust in God and, at the same time, an expression of love for our neighbour. There are those who think, based on a one-sided spirituality, that prayer should be unalloyed contemplation of God, free of all distraction, as if the names and faces of others were somehow an intrusion to be avoided. Yet in reality, our prayer will be all the more pleasing to God and more effective for our growth in holiness if, through intercession, we attempt to practice the twofold commandment that Jesus left us.

Intercessory prayer is an expression of our fraternal concern for others, since we are able to embrace their lives, their deepest troubles and their loftiest dreams. Of those who commit themselves generously to intercessory prayer we can apply the words of Scripture: "This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people". (*Maccabees 15:14*)

Rejoice and be glad - para 154