



# SUNDAY 28 JULY 2024

## DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**The Parishes of:** Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington  
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

### ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

#### 17th Sunday of the Year (B): John 6: 1-15

You may or may not be old enough to remember the Ethiopian famine of the 1980s. Dramatic news coverage of it was brought to our TV screens by BBC reporter Michael Buerk and others covering the disaster on location.

Events at a distance from us don't always engage us personally. But if you've ever been starving you take in this news differently. If you've had mouths to feed or had difficulty feeding your kids, you'll react to pictures of emaciated children.

If the problem really gets to you, you muster others and devise assistance. Singer songwriter with The Boomtown Rats rock band, Bob Geldof, contacted other musicians and singers and marshalled Live Aid concerts and records whose income translated into mega food tonnage. Folks like us believe that no one should go hungry in today's world.

Jesus thought the same. He was a great people-watcher - and people watched him, you and I included. We all need food. Big crowds need catering. Hunger and worse is not acceptable. Doing without can be admirable, being forced to do without lacks humanity. Don't miss what's going on here. The one they called Master is about to teach a lesson. He's not just feeding people. He's about to re-interpret the whole notion of food.

The Gospel this Sunday and for the next four Sundays should challenge our understanding of what feeds us, who feeds us and how are we being fed. We think we know these stories. Don't get comfortable - they're meant to shock us. We're being questioned here. Our appreciation of God's presence here always falls short. Our own casual and shelf-worn ideas about real food are under scrutiny. In our Deliveroo and Just Eat world, our take on sustenance needs re-defining and not just by nutritionists.

Jesus fed thousands. He's still doing it. Bob Geldof and others did it - you might have helped. If you support or need a foodbank, how do you think about what holds body and soul together? Not what, but who is food for you? Note the question is Who, not What. We are fed by the self-giving of others. This is a love story. Jesus the Master Storyteller starts with loaves and fish as a long lead-in to the personal gift of himself - the Bread of Life.

Do you say grace before meals? Pause before you eat. Ever the biggest meal is only a starter. God has more to say.



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#### Pope Francis on family values

Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life.

Here, though, I would stress the great importance of the family, which is the place in which life - the gift of God - can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life. In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say "thank you" as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings.

- *Laudato Si para 213*