



# SUNDAY 30 JUNE 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

#### SS Peter and Paul (B) : Matthew 16: 13-19

It was important the pub had a sports channel on its wide TV. We didn't stretch to that at home and anyway it was good to meet up with pals to watch the match. The local pub's atmosphere and a couple of pints all helped. If the right team won, all the better.

Ref's decisions and VAR could make for energetic opinions. Player's wages and their performance could generate heated debate. Individual skills might be extraordinary but teamwork not. Last week we got into a discussion about the cult of celebrity and its effects on sports personalities. News coverage left us unimpressed.

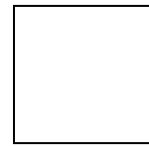
Conversation took an unusual turn when a newcomer asked for our personal heroes. We weren't short of suggestions, but bemoaned the desire for fame and recognition that seemingly characterised the ambitions and hopes of some individuals younger than ourselves. And yes, we admitted with a laugh to being grumpy old men.

Tommy, my next door neighbour, got on about his Dad's stories of school days and the triumphant heroes of comic books. He was also a fan of the lives of the saints that he thought we should stress more in church and in today's classrooms. Miracles and spectacular happenings are inspiring but he thought more about the human beings behind the accolades and the heady reputations. Many got serious flack from others. Fear, suffering and endurance dogged the lives and exploits of the courageous people we call holy - Peter and Paul being among the best known.

These two stalwarts were, and are, delightfully human. Not easy individuals to live with I suspect. But the life changes they made were phenomenal. Tell-tale signs of the Holy Spirit are all over Peter and Paul's stories. From catching fish and making tents, they were turned inside out in doing the Lord's work. Their stories amazing, the cost beyond words.

Talk about people reinventing themselves, stories of rags to riches, obscurity to fame, the journey from being type-cast to holy resilience is a punishing road. Not usually understood or admired by dependents and friends who pigeonhole us and want us to be predictable, the repeated acquiescence to the Lord's demands is a risky business. Holiness is never a dreamy and blissful ascent but a down to earth, demanding and uneven struggle.

Peter and Paul differ in many ways but were open to change, to being changed, and to our God revealing himself moment to moment. We can ask their help. It's daring. Risk it. The journey is surprising.



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#### Pope Francis on our shared humanity

The true worth of the different countries of our world is measured by their ability to think not simply as a country but also as part of the larger human family. This is seen especially in times of crisis. Narrow forms of nationalism are an extreme expression of an inability to grasp the meaning of this gratuitousness. They err in thinking that they can develop on their own, heedless of the ruin of others, that by closing their doors to others they will be better protected. Immigrants are seen as usurpers who have nothing to offer. This leads to the simplistic belief that the poor are dangerous and useless, while the powerful are generous benefactors. Only a social and political culture that readily and 'gratuitously' welcomes others will have a future.

**- Fratelli tutti paras 141**