



SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY 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

5th Sunday of the Year (C) Luke 5: 1-11

No one likes to be told how to do their job - especially if the word comes from someone inexperienced or unacquainted with the complexities of what they're saying. Every man to his own trade. Outsiders may be politely told they don't understand - or maybe not so politely dismissed.

Simon Peter ran a fishing business. Jesus comes from the building trade - surely respecting another man's expertise, but he's outside the skills he knows best. And after using Simon's boat as a pulpit, he asks him to move out into deep water and put out the nets. I'd love to have seen the look on Simon's face.

Simon knows the lake. They're just in from a night shift. They caught nothing. No fish, no money. A waste of time and energy. But Simon is already intrigued by Jesus' teaching and presence. After expressing what sounds like a vain hope, he does what the teacher asks. I wonder what his other fishermen mates thought.

Then it happened. Not in these waters, on this day, did Simon's life experience suggest they'd be swamped by a massive catch. Too many fish, nets beginning to burst, boat overloaded to danger level - it was time to shout for help. His once sceptic mates get there as fast as they can. Helping a mate is what you do. Plenty of fish means everyone benefits. They must have worked feverishly to cope with the risks and the immediate bonanza.

Simon's shattered. Not because he's tired. The Lord has spoken to him through the language he understands. Simon knows about fishing - but this has confounded his life's learning. Something else is happening here and it's momentous. His face must have said it all, but he goes further - on his knees before something beyond sense. He's met the Lord. Feels inadequate to be in his presence. Needs time to sort his head out. There's too much going on here. Pardon the pun, but he's hooked. This is a day he'll never forget.

Jesus speaks to fishermen through fish, to sick people through healing, to hungry people through food. He hugs lepers, gives 20-20 vision to the blind, brings sound to the deaf, calms storms and enters the world of individuals in ways that make personal and particular sense - what a communicator!

So how does he speak to you? What are your favourite stories of Jesus and why? What picture do you have of him? Have you found him in times of hardship, sickness or loss - or has he found you? It's fine for us to relish the story of the miraculous catch of fish, but Simon is frightened - his senses have been breached. Jesus doesn't abandon him or his mates. He jokes about using their skills to catch people. We're in the same boat. Don't miss what's going on here. Thanks.



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Pope Francis talking of Climate as a common good

The principle of maximising profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment; as long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. In a word, businesses profit by calculating and paying only a fraction of the costs involved. Yet only when the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognised with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations, can those actions be considered ethical. An instrumental way of reasoning, which provides a purely static analysis of realities in the service of present needs, is at work whether resources are allocated by the market or by central planning.

What happens with politics? Let us keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power. Today, it is the case that some economic sectors exercise more power than states themselves. But economics without politics cannot be justified, since this would make it impossible to favour other ways of handling the various aspects of the present crisis. The mind-set which leaves no room for sincere concern for the environment is the same mind-set which lacks concern for the inclusion of the most vulnerable members of society. For the current model, with its emphasis on success and self-reliance, does not appear to favour an investment in efforts to help the slow, the weak or the less talented to find opportunities in life.

- Laudato Si - paras 195-196