



SUNDAY 14 APRIL 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

3rd Second Sunday of Easter (B) Luke 24: 35-48

In one of those clever features of Gospel writers whenever anyone called Jesus 'Master' or 'Rabbi' which means Teacher, they were about to be taught something - and we are too.

The group we know as the Apostles were quite a mixed crew. They were four fishermen among the Twelve and we lack information about the backgrounds of the others. There were sometimes caught arguing among themselves about their individual importance. Jesus got impatient with them - they appeared not to get the message. We're short on facts, but the Lord clearly had to do some teambuilding. So much depended on these individuals. Let's include ourselves too.

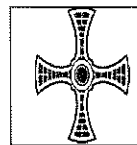
So after rising from death, a great deal of teaching and hand-holding was clearly necessary for this group to understand and to be equipped to help others.

Watch today's Gospel. Beginning with a 'show, don't tell' episode, he invites his group to touch him, feel his flesh and bones, shows them his torn hands and feet, eats fish in front of them. It's a lesson from the Master. The explosive event of resurrection requires new perception. We can't afford to be bystanders, we're his students now. Put yourself there. Try to imagine.

Just as Jesus explained familiar Scriptures to Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus, in today's appearance with the Apostles he does the same again - going through sacred texts that they thought they knew, doing a hands-on, step by step, stay-with-me kind of process. They need now to see through a new lens. The world has changed and they must. By extension, so must you and I.

We can't stand in their shoes, but the Master continues to teach and we are part of his class, we sit at his feet. How well do we understand this? We're more of a motley crew perhaps than were the Twelve. Their Pentecost experience of wind and fire - powerful change agents - points us in the direction of God's abiding Spirit living with us. Remember the Spirit's gifts - wisdom, understanding, right judgement, courage, knowledge, reverence and a spirit of wonder and awe in God's presence.

Class of 2024, listen up, shape up. We are to renew the face of the earth!



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Pope Francis on our Gospel task

Evangelization takes place in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19-20). In these verses we see how the risen Christ sent his followers to preach the Gospel in every time and place, so that faith in him might spread to every corner of the earth.

The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him "to go forth". Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (Genesis 12: 1-3). Moses heard God's call: "Go, I send you" (Exodus 3:10) and led the people towards the promised land. (cf Exodus 3:17). To Jeremiah God says: "To all whom I send you, you shall go" (Jeremiah 1:7). In our day Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth". Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel.

The Joy of the Gospel—paras 19 and 20