



SUNDAY 14 APRIL 2019

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

### Palm Sunday

The cult of celebrity has grown enormously in the last few decades. Some individual young people when questioned about what they would like to be, remarked they'd like to be famous. Famous for what? - Just famous. No details given or worked out. I suppose it's a desire to be recognised for something, to be regarded as somebody, to matter to people and the more the better.

Today's feast of Palm Sunday gives us the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey. Roman leaders would cause a splash by riding in on a beautiful stallion - an eye catching status symbol - surrounded by attendants and other trappings of power. Jesus creates a different image. Donkeys, for all their usefulness are hardly the epitome of status and privilege.

But the crowd went wild! Ripping branches off the palm trees and strewing them in his path - and spreading their coats on the road as gestures of welcome and appreciation. Roman leaders would have relished the gestures; Jesus would have been supported by their enthusiasm. But a few days later, the crowd turned against him, egged on by powerful instigators looking for reasons to dispose of him. Think of how a crowd can become a mob, fired up by an infectious hysteria.

The remaining story is always old and always new. As events unroll, the drumbeats heralding his death grow louder and more insistent. The world can change rapidly - or so our personal stories can. The inequality of a lone individual against the power-brokers of officialdom don't create level playing fields or offer any advantage. Jesus accepts his fate, soaking up the malevolence in order to defeat it with as much dignity as Roman brutality allows. To conquer death, you only have to die. It's a new way of teaching the cost of love. The story has to be repeated often so that we never tire of its lessons and its challenge. Our God speaks to us from a cross and from an empty tomb. We hopefully hear the message afresh.

"It was a news event - front page, stop-the-press news. Something happened. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Gospel was first preached as news. Whenever it has been preached with power, it has been preached as news. Whenever it has been dwindled down to mere advice, become merely editorial Christianity, it has evaporated into a cloud as vague as fog". - Halford E Luccock - Yale Divinity School, USA



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**CAFOD Calling:** Would you like to inspire the young people in our Catholic schools? CAFOD is seeking volunteers who would be willing to visit Catholic schools around our diocese to speak about CAFOD's work. Full training will be given. To find out more give David Cross a call on 0191 384 4847 or email [hexhamandnewcastle@cafod.org.uk](mailto:hexhamandnewcastle@cafod.org.uk)

**Tuesday Lunch Club** - Every Tuesday at 12 noon there is a lunch club run by the Ecumenical Community of Crook. We meet in St. Andrew's Church Hall, Dawson Street, Crook. Lunch is free (with plate for donations). The aim of the project is to invite the elderly, lonely and anyone who doesn't get a regular hot meal. All are welcome for fellowship and food.

**Diocesan Festival statement** - For six years we have had a highly successful annual diocesan festival. In good biblical tradition this year will be a fallow year. We will be back in June 2020 with a bigger and brighter vision inspired by 'The God who speaks' (Bishops Conference of England and Wales Year of the Word 2020). To receive updates and to be the first to book check out our Diocesan social media page and website. Now lost for something to do one the 22nd June 2019? Join us at the Emmaus Youth Village for a family day filled with Fun and Faith - details to follow.

"When people begin to ignore human dignity, it will not be long before they begin to ignore human rights" - G K Chesterton.

"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it". - Abraham Lincoln

"I want to repeat to you what I said once before; the shepherd does not want security while they give no security to his flock".

-St Oscar Romero.