



SUNDAY 12 MAY 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

### 4th Sunday of Easter

Who's voice do you love to hear? Who is it who when you see them you know simply and beyond question that you are loved? Is there anyone you feel is with you even when you are apart?

Do these questions give you some inkling, some glimpse of how it is between you and Jesus? They're meant to invite you to think, to daydream and ponder. Whether you feel love for Jesus or not, he loves you - totally and always - and you can't stop that. You can, however, delight in how it really is between you and give thanks.

Today's short Gospel is too short to be heard once at Mass so take it home and read it again, over and over. Here it is - Jesus said: "The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from me. The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone and no one can steal them from the Father. The Father and I are one". (John 10:27-30).

You may not be too keen on Jesus referring to us as sheep but he uses the image of himself as the Good Shepherd, caring for us as a shepherd does with his flock. The analogy had more relevance to the people of his time than it does now. But wait - shepherding is about leadership and care and it requires that the sheep follow even when they're unsure where they're going. That can and does apply to you and me.

We describe ourselves as Jesus' followers. He's the leader, making sure we're protected, cared for and fed. He comes to us in many disguises working through all those who look out for us and help us in a whole range of ways. You may well also be in a position where you in your turn lead, care for, protect and help others. Jesus is your model to be talked to and studied so that he can reach people perceptively through each of us. This is Good Shepherd Sunday' We need to see Church terms as a kind of shorthand and break down the jargon so that we know personally what it means and how it applies to us. You may want to read the Gospel again.

It's also Vocations Sunday. We don't only pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life but for your vocation as Jesus' follower in whatever life asks of you - married or single - so that he can care for others through you. Thank you for all your shepherding.



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### Quotations from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelic Gaudier" - The Joy of the Gospel (2013)

I want a church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelised by them. The new evangelisation is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them. - para 198.

We need to be convinced that charity "is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)". I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare. - para 205.

### Quotations from Pope Francis' encyclical letter, Laudato Si

I wish to address every person living on this plant - para 3

Humanity is called to recognise the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption - para 23

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications - it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day - para 25

We cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture - para 43

Greater attention must be given to the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests. We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family - para 52