

# DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE



*✠ Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham  
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle*



## **Pastoral Letter**

**To be read in all parishes  
weekend of 30 September / 1 October**

My Dear People

St Paul has an extremely important message for us in our Second Reading today. Notice how he tells the people of Philippi, "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus". He wants everyone in the community to be united, having "a common purpose and a common mind". To do this we must not think of our own interests first but those of others; those of the community as a whole. This is especially important for us in the Diocese as we look forward to putting in place education and training needs for the development of our new partnerships.

The plans for the future are set out in a document called "Developing Discipleship" that is being launched today. It outlines a great variety of courses and programmes to address the needs of different groups of people who we need to equip for the task ahead: renewing our diocesan mission and vision.

The first step is for every one of us to look at ourselves, in the light of what St Paul sets out in that reading, and to try to discern what we are currently doing and how we might contribute to the future developments. You may be startled by the analogy used as part of this process. It appears on the postcards you received today. It invites us to reflect on whether we might be "logs, hogs or cogs".

There are times in our lives when we act like "logs" – happy to sit back and let others do all the work. Sometimes, because of important commitments to family and work, or perhaps because of ill health, people have to be "logs" when it comes to involvement in church. However, after reflecting on what St Paul has to say today perhaps some of us need to move on to become "cogs".

There are also "hogs" in our parish communities: people who take over jobs and do them for years and years. These people are very faithful and we owe them a great deal. However, some people "hog" tasks in such a way that others are excluded from contributing to the community. Such people need to reflect really hard on what St Paul is calling for today. As CS Lewis said "True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less". We need to find new ways that enable everyone to have the opportunity to develop their talents and ministries for the good of the whole community in the years ahead.

cont/.....

# DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE



✠ *Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham*  
*Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle*



...../2

“Cogs” are people who are focused on the community as a whole cooperating and working together for the growth and development of everyone. ‘Cogs’ see themselves as part of one body, they acknowledge the gifts and parts that others play and they seek to enable others to fully realise their calling and to share responsibility. This is what we are seeking to develop for the future. This is what we are launching today.

“Developing Discipleship” is a large document, each parish has a full copy and it is also available online. It seeks to take us through a process that explores the dynamics of our communities’ relationships and recognises that to move forward involves growth and learning - clergy and laity together. Some of the material is referred to in the leaflet that you received coming to Mass today. Please take time to read it as individuals, as parishes, and as partnerships.

Our mission, the ultimate goal of all our work, is nothing other than St Paul’s final words today: so that, “every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

God Bless.

With my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Séamus".

✠ Rt Rev Séamus Cunningham  
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

---

**Bishop’s House, East Denton Hall, 800 West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 2BJ**  
Tel: +44 (0) 191 228 0003 Fax: +44 (0) 191 274 0432 Email: [office@rcdhn.org.uk](mailto:office@rcdhn.org.uk)

Company limited by guarantee registered in England Number 7732977  
Registered Charity Number 1143450