

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE



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



Pastoral Letter to be read out in all Parishes **on weekend of 2 and 3 June 2012**

My dear people

Comedians have their catchphrases, advertisers beat out their slogans, politicians their sound bites and newspapers their headlines - everyone competes for our attention. It's not enough just to have the goods - they have to be sold. Successful selling is a skill.

Have you ever wondered how today's media would have covered the Resurrection for instance? First reactions from astonished or bewildered friends might have provided the lead-in for some immediate or even thoughtful analysis - but the story is still running; it won't go away!

Today's feast of The Trinity is the heart of our faith - Jesus woke the world to new images of God's love. You and I are called into communion with God and we need to be skilled at telling the stories of this Good News and be imaginative about how we get the news out to others. Stories carry our life.

We all share good stories. Without good storytellers and without reporters, editors, photographers, cameramen and sound technicians, and all that they use to spread the word, including newspapers, television, radio and the internet, we'd soon feel isolated and maybe sense that the world was passing us by.

You may take issue with the selection of news. Far more happens than we are given to hear about. The unusual, the frightening or the trivial may be more attention grabbing or profit making than the millions of good initiatives that keep the world turning, that show how much people matter. News is vitally important but it's just as important that it is balanced and mostly relevant.

The Good News is the living gospel, flourishing in a wealth of positive stories of who does what for whom. It's happening day in and day out, 24/7, and in our own streets, parishes and groups. Yes, the Church is a huge, world-wide organisation, but it's also the corner shop and we experience it locally. The truth is, we are the stories God tells - and it would be awful to miss what the Spirit is doing amongst us.

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So I'm asking you today to stay informed about what's happening in our parishes and in the Diocese. Just as you wouldn't want to miss your parish bulletin and you like to know what's going on, I hope you will also make a point of reading each month's Northern Cross.

The newspaper for our Diocese comes out tops in its field. The dedicated, small band of people who produce it for us, see it always as helping us to know ourselves and to have a healthy and lively view of what's happening in the world - on our doorstep and further afield. News will at times encourage and challenge us. It can make us happy and sad, and sometimes drive us mad. But it's essential. If we didn't have Northern Cross, we'd have to start something like it. I'd be delighted if you would make it a regular part of how you keep in touch.

It will be increasingly important as a means of sharing how we manage change, how we come together to make things happen - making sure the Good News of the gospel is consistently heard and that we express it by what we do in our parishes and in the Diocese. The paper needs and deserves your support. It certainly has mine. Healthy communication is a task we all share.

Thank you for all you continue to do as the living voice of the Church.

With every good wish

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