



SUNDAY 15TH APRIL 2018

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

Third Sunday of Easter

It wasn't just rumour. Jesus appeared among them! We're so familiar with the story, but for them it was a shattering weekend. The baffling move from grief to joy was extreme. Ecstatic but exhausting, too much, too fast. It turned them inside out. It messed with their heads but it fuelled their preaching and set them alight. We're still hearing the echo and telling the stories.

To the two people on the road to Emmaus and to the group in today's Gospel, he opens their minds to understand the scriptures. It was like a jigsaw coming together, piece by piece.

We have to let him read the scriptures to us. Help us to see the connections, letting it dawn on us what all these words meant all along. Hearing the music of it afresh, as if for the first time. Suffering and hardship take us through death into resurrection and forgiveness.

In today's Gospel story, Jesus directs that *"repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this."* For some time now we've been reciting our partnership prayer. We pray that the Spirit will *"deepen the faith we're invited to share and inspire us to become faithful witnesses"*.

How do we do this witnessing? We preach by our lives and witness by our manner. We need to breathe forgiveness. It takes a long time.



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ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

The Mission was a time given to us.

We received it, shaped it, used it and gathered with one another, young and young at heart. It was a time of opportunity, prayer and meeting.

What did you do? What did we learn? How do we want the experience to take us forward and to create more openings for meeting and for the Holy Spirit to move among us? We have a lot to gain from each other and from sharing our thoughts, feelings and ideas.

We have an opportunity to do that on Thursday this week at 6pm in St John's School. It's a Mission Evaluation gathering. Do please come if you can. Let's listen to one another and create a space for one idea to bounce off and give rise to another. It not only shares our experience with those who will be planning missions in other areas but the next few steps of our partnership journey could be given colour and substance in how we reflect on our recent Mission weeks. It'll be good to see you!

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Pope Francis has written another great message for us all. Remember 'The Joy of the Gospel' and 'Laudato Si' and 'Amoris Laetitia' (The Joy of Love)? The latest message is called 'Rejoice and Be Glad' (Gaudete et Exultate).

Here's a few soundbites:

- "God wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence."
- "The path to holiness is a way of life, not an intellectual exercise."
- "Each believer discerns his or her own path that they bring out the very best of themselves... rather than hopelessly trying to initiate something not meant for them... there are many actual ways of bearing witness."
- "The beatitudes are the Christian's identity card."