



SUNDAY 12 APRIL 2026

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

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## ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

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### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter (A) - John 20: 19-31***

Jesus' first words in meeting his apostles after rising from a brutal death were simply, 'Peace be with you.' And he said it again after showing his hands and side – carrying the identifying human marks of the inhumanity that caused his death. At this time of serious world unrest - of illegal wars and narcissistic, power-driven dictators - our Gospel reading at Mass today tells us that Jesus brings his peace – the dearest and almost unimaginable gift we could ever hope for in any of life's upheavals.

The battle with the world's sin is over. Sin and death defeated on their own ground in the head-on contest that breaks their power through Jesus' death and rising from the dead. The language turns to forgiveness. Forgiveness we can never merit. The work has been done for us. We could not do it ourselves. Only the God who joined us in our humanity can, as one of us, smash the push and pull of weakness, hatred and absorbing greed that distort the image of God in which we were made. And the living Lord entrusts the forgiveness to those following him to dispense to fellow sinners and restore sanity.

The apostles had run away at Jesus' arrest but re-grouped for support – a frightened church, hiding and trying to understand what had happened. And, always and still the Master, Jesus comes to care for them and entrust to them his mission of acceptance and pardon to be shared with others. The trust is staggering! God never leaves us. His presence continues through the gift of the Spirit. These followers are sent, as Jesus was, to bring the good news that we are deeply loved, especially when we don't deserve it. Forgiveness is at the heart of who our God is – merciful to those who don't know what they're doing and even to those who do know.

It pays us to re-visit our understand of forgiveness and the enormity of the cost – Jesus' surrender to death. We can never treat forgiveness as a casual and functional service. The waters of Baptism plunged us into the drama of Jesus' death and resurrection. The sacrament of Reconciliation is our Church's invitation to formally and personally receive the forgiveness passed on to us through the apostles and their successors by the Lord through the Holy Spirit. Look at the words of absolution: 'God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and has sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. It's worth taking time to reflect on and savour these words. They describe and connect us into the self-giving of our loving God.

Enjoy Eastertide. It's a journey of re-discovery if we wish to see it and embrace it.



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### **Pope Leo on our personal values and the poverty in the world**

A concrete commitment to the poor must also be accompanied by a change in mentality that can have an impact at the cultural level. In fact, the illusion of happiness derived from a comfortable life pushes many people towards a vision of life centred on the accumulation of wealth and social success at all costs, even at the expense of others and by taking advantage of unjust social ideals and political-economic systems that favour the strongest. Thus, in a world where the poor are increasingly numerous we paradoxically see the growth of a wealthy elite, living in a bubble of comfort and luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people.

This means that a culture still persists – sometimes well disguised – that discards others without even realising it and tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings. A few years ago, the photo of a lifeless child lying on a Mediterranean beach caused an uproar; unfortunately, apart from some momentary outcry, similar events are becoming increasingly irrelevant and seen as marginal news items

- ***Dilexi Te (On Love for the Poor) para 11.***