



SUNDAY 7 JUNE 2026

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

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

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

The Feast of Corpus Christi - John 6: 51-59

In St Mary's Church, Bishop Auckland, there's a set of stained glass windows designed by parishioner and celebrated pitman painter, Tom McGuinness in 1988. Tom's windows tell the story of God feeding his people through the ages. The windows depict Abraham and Sarah feeding travellers, God providing manna in the desert, The Last Supper, The Emmaus story – the Lord recognised in the breaking of bread, St Cuthbert, feeding people with God's word on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, St Bede, writing Scripture commentary in his cell in the monastery at Jarrow, St Mary's parishioners receiving Communion, and a haunting picture of starving children, challenging us to continue in the Lord's name to feed the world.

You and I need food. Jesus loved food. He sat at many a table with a motley variety of people, nourishing them with love and acceptance. And at a Passover meal with his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion, he gave himself to them and to us in the form of ordinary bread and wine.

Food is a language. Track where it comes from, the individuals and equipment that make it possible, and we end up with volumes of stories of hard graft, invention and skill before necessity became exploited in the pursuit of money. Walk through allotments and tune in to those who take pride in growing their own food – a sober indictment against the fast food and ultra processed stuff that fails to nourish and doesn't sustain. In Jesus' time, bread and simple wine were staples. You added whatever else you might have to keep body and soul together. Rich people apart, a crust of bread in the hand was precious. Jesus chose bread and wine in keeping our bodies and souls together.

The brilliance and the cost of the feeding we know as the Eucharist is the way the Lord requires us to remember him – as giving his life for us and giving his life to us. At Mass we have to fight the dangers of individualistic piety and the dulled awareness that comes with familiarity. We are taken into God's life. and are sent to renew the face of the earth. If we ask what difference does it make, we meet our limited appreciation of what is taking place here. It's tremendous but it's not magic. Engaging with the Lord requires we take on Jesus' mindset in how we love one another. Remaining unchanged is tragic. A congregation in Communion with the Lord – and thereby with one another – can, in quiet and even dramatic ways, make a lot of difference. With foodbanks, with CAFOD, we can share our bread and feed the undernourished of the world.

The Lord will ask, 'When I was hungry did you feed me?' He feeds us. It has to be yes.



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Pope Leo on the true riches of the Church

A little less than two centuries after St Paul, a deacon, St Lawrence, demonstrated his fidelity to Jesus Christ by uniting martyrdom and service to the poor. From St Ambrose's account, we learn that Lawrence, a deacon in Rome during the pontificate of Pope Sixtus II, was forced by the Roman authorities to turn over the treasures of the Church. The following day he brought the poor with him. Questioned about where the promised treasures might be, he pointed to the poor saying, 'These are the treasures of the Church'. While narrating this event, St Ambrose asks: "What treasures does Jesus have that are more precious than those in which he loves to show himself?" And, remembering that ministers of the Church must never neglect the care of the poor, much less accumulate goods for their own benefit, he says; "This task must be carried out with sincere faith and wise foresight. Certainly, if anyone derives personal advantage from it, he commits a crime; but if he distributes the proceeds to the poor or redeems a prisoner, he performs a work of mercy".

Dilexi Te para 38