



SUNDAY 21 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

12th Sunday of the Year (A): Matthew 10: 26-33

My friend knows someone who pretty well scrubs clean the plates before they go in the dishwasher. You'll know the type. You may have met someone like her - you may be a bit the same yourself.

Standards and preferences can be clung to so fiercely that you might ask whether the person has the habit or the habit has the person. Driven people are not so rare.

We understand and laugh at idiosyncrasies. God does too - probably. But Jesus is talking serious stuff in today's Gospel. It's about witnessing to the values of the Kingdom and the sacred worth of every person. Prejudice, inherited bias, personal likes, dislikes and fears abound.

One of our difficulties is that we're good at fooling ourselves. Self knowledge is not easy because we don't stand outside ourselves. Our knowledge is subjective. We filter everything through inadequate self awareness and don't see our faults and bias as we should. We read newspapers and websites that feed us others' selective views and create a worldview that can only ever be partial. We may often read only views that agree with our own.

It would be good if we discussed the Gospel as frequently as we discussed how we feel about what's happening in the world or in national or local politics. Getting a grip on Jesus' teaching is a lifetime's task. Applying it to ourselves and living out the message is a requirement - the Lord doesn't expect us to be armchair Christians.

This Gospel reminds us, if we need it, just what a superb teacher Jesus was and remains. Three times in this short passage he tells us not to be afraid. Three times. Be open, be up front, don't pretend. You will be opposed and persecuted. Don't be afraid. One day all will be revealed.

Jesus opens up about our all powerful Father, the only one really worth fearing. Yet this Father holds us in a love so detailed that he doesn't have to count - he already knows how many hairs sprout from our heads. It's a graphic way of describing intimacy. No need to be frightened of him then.

The message of God's love and forgiveness must be spread and lived. Standing up for justice, recognising and alleviating poverty, confronting greed and exploitation means we'll be criticised, ridiculed and variously attacked. Active Christian values are a threat to those requiring or expecting collusion with their vested interests, personal power or money making.

Jesus warns us of opposition. He met it so his followers will. He assures us he'll stand up for us if we stand up for him. It's no surprise that we're worth more than hundreds of sparrows, but a mature following of Jesus requires an honesty and readiness to learn and to act on what we learn. He might have said, 'Get real'.



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Pope Leo on technology pressures and ethics

The danger of humanity becoming a victim of its own achievements was already clearly recognised by St Paul VI, who warned that "the most extraordinary scientific progress, the most astounding technical feats and the most amazing economic growth, unless accompanied by authentic moral and social progress, will in the long run go against man". For this reason, technological progress - valuable in itself - requires careful discernment of the anthropological vision that guides it and the ends it pursues. If technological development advances without a corresponding ethical and social progress, the result may be an increase in means without a growth in humanity: "having more" without "being more". In such a scenario, there is a risk that individuals will be evaluated principally according to the outcomes they produce

Here we must recognise another crucial aspect, which I have noted earlier. In many cases within the digital context, control over platforms, infrastructure, data and computing power does not rest with States, but with major economic and technological actors. These entities effectively set the conditions for access, determine the rules of visibility and shape the very possibilities for participation. When such power is concentrated in the hands of a few, it tends to become opaque and evade public oversight, increasing the risk of distorted forms of development that give rise to new dependencies, exclusions, manipulations and inequalities.

Magnifica Humanitas paras 94 and 95