



SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 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

30th Sunday of the Year (A) Matthew 22: 34-40

The Beatles sang it in 1967 – ‘All you need is love’. I’ve been in groups singing it gladly, it’s a very repetitive line and you don’t need to know any more of the words to join in. Singing along with a recording can help to recall some of the other words of the song, but the line just before the chorus simply says ‘It’s easy’. Friends, loving ain’t easy.

The song came about from a BBC request to the Beatles to represent the UK as our contribution to ‘Our World’, the first live global satellite television broadcast aired on June 25th 1967, seen by over 400 million people across 25 countries. It was a simple, fitting message, easily understood in different cultures.

There are heaps of love songs in any language and love has inspired music the world over. Being loved is a blessing. But the heady, romantic love doesn’t last. It’s the commitment through the hard times, the sacrifices and the often unthanked hanging in there that keeps belief in the other person(s) despite difficulties, setbacks, letdowns and crises that prove the lifeblood of relationships.

God loves us first. It’s who God is, and our experience of love is a share in God’s self-giving, scaled down though it be. The Gospel for today’s Mass is a brief statement about life itself – to love God back seriously, and to understand that the compassionate, tender love we receive from Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the challenging model for how we engage with the rest of humanity. The First Letter of St John puts it succinctly when it questions how if we do not love a brother who we can see, can we say we love God who we have not seen (1 John 4: 20). I enjoy singing ‘All you need is love’, but love requires a fistful of other qualities like tolerance, a thick skin, compassion and a belief in the worth of someone despite attitude, rejection and bruising words or behaviour. God’s love for us shoulders all that and more. He gives us a heart of flesh to recognise a vulnerable neighbour and the need for a kindly word, a helping hand and more. The care we’ve received from others can help us develop a template to do likewise.

Love means never stopping learning - watching Jesus washing feet, overriding the law to heal on the Sabbath, opposing injustice and arrogance and coming to aid the weak and defenceless. Love is the power that affirms those who feel overlooked, unimportant or having lost faith in themselves. Mother Teresa of Calcutta likened loneliness and being starved of love as the world’s great famine, more than shortage of food.

The Lord tells us that to offer a cup of water in his name will be rewarded because helping someone else is the same as helping him who shares our humanity. To reject another person is to reject him. Loving God and neighbour and two sides of the same coin. How we show our love by putting ourselves out for others is the visible measure of how we love our extravagant, loving God.



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Pope Leo continues his challenging document on the care of the poor

In his Encyclical *Dilexi Vos*, Pope Francis reminded us that social sin consolidates a “structure of sin” within society, and is frequently part of a dominant mindset that considers normal or reasonable what is merely selfishness and indifference. This then gives rise to social alienation. It then becomes normal to ignore the poor and live as if they did not exist. It then likewise seems reasonable to organise the economy in such a way that sacrifices are demanded of the masses in order to serve the needs of the powerful. Meanwhile, the poor are promised only a few ‘drops’ that trickle down, until the next global crisis brings things back to where they were. A genuine form of alienation is present when we limit ourselves to theoretical excuses instead of seeking to resolve the concrete problems of those who suffer. St John Paul II had already observed that, ‘a society is alienated if its forms of social organisation, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer the gift of self and to establish solidarity between people.’

- **Dilexi Vos** para 93