SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER 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

Feast of Christ the King - Matthew 25: 31-46

There is a time for things. You can read a book too early; to get the message, a certain life experience may be needed. Some folks own up to marrying too young – the maturity necessary for success may not be there and be unlikely to develop. At times, settings can also be wrong. What works in one place may be quite inappropriate in another and so on. Life was ever thus.

In today's Gospel about the last judgement, Jesus is the King. Earlier in his public ministry, when some people impressed by his miracles and teaching wanted to make him king, he walked away. The time wasn't right. Their notion of a king was far from the Lord's ways. It was interesting that Pontius Pilate was sufficiently intrigued by Jesus, who admitted to him that he was a king but of a different kind of kingdom, that the note put on the cross gave him the title King of the Jews. Pilate still missed the point.

Jesus spoke a lot about the Kingdom of God - a very different and alternative state where the powers of compassion and forgiveness and the realm of love embraces its citizens and displays the dazzling care for others that is simply God's passionate regard for each of us. It's ours to take to heart and copy. Jesus personalised that love through the humanity he shared with us, translating God's love into practical, visible acts that honoured the distinctive and unrepeatable worth of everyone.

Our Gospel passage details it further - feeding the hungry, housing the homeless and the whole gamut of life-enhancing services that show how it is in God's kingdom. We are challenged to make this real. To pray to the Father that 'thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. It's the pattern of Kingdom living to which we aspire and on which we'll be judged. Jesus' life and example become the gold standard by which we'll be assessed. His life on earth and the gift of the Spirit within us are the guides bestowed by the incarnate Son of God, aways the King, who chooses, if you'll pardon the language, to reign in our hearts.

We are to be visibly identifiable as disciples of this King, doing our bit to create a world different from that where the driving forces of money, power and violence seek control. This feast comes close to the celebrations of All Saints and All Souls, and memories of those who changed our personal, small and local worlds. The sacrifices they made to enable a passable or good quality of life and possibility for others by denying themselves have been the raw material of holiness.

These are the words of Pope Leo to his Augustinian colleagues, years before he became Pope: "The Church, if she wants to be Christ's Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place".

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More from Pope Leo on the place of the poor in the Church's teaching

The same Aparecida Document, taking up a theme treated in earlier Conferences of the Latin American episcopate, insists on the need to consider marginalised communities as *subjects* capable of creating their own culture, rather than as *objects* of charity on the part of others. This means that such communities have the right to embrace the Gospel and to celebrate and communicate their faith in accord with the values present within their own cultures. Their experience of poverty gives them the ability to recognise aspects of reality that others cannot see; for this reason, society needs to listen to them. The same holds true for the Church, which should regard positively their 'popular' practice of the faith. A fine passage from the Aparecida Document can help us reflect on this point and our proper response. "Only the closeness that makes us friends enables us to appreciate deeply the values of the poor today, their legitimate desires, and their own manner of living the faith…Day by day, the poor become agents of evangelisation and of comprehensive human promotion: they educate their children in the faith, engage in ongoing solidarity among relatives and neighbours, constantly seek God, and give life to the Church's pilgrimage. In the light of the Gospel, we recognise their immense dignity and their sacred worth in the eyes of Christ, who was poor like them and excluded among them. Based on this experience of faith, we will share with them the defence of their rights".

- **Dilexi Te para 100**