

The Body of Christ

Fans of Country and Western music may recall Don Williams releasing a song in 1975 with the title 'You're my best friend'. It became a top request whenever he performed afterwards. The chorus is beautiful: *You're my bread when I'm hungry, You're my shelter from troubled winds, You're my anchor in life's ocean - but most of all, you're my best friend*. Check it out and sing along. An endearing tribute to be able to make to anyone. But note that we are fed by the love and presence of significant individuals who sustain and nourish us in a host of ways. It's not just about bread.

In today's passage from St John's Gospel, Jesus is entering difficult waters - trying to shift the people from free handouts of bread to inviting them to see himself as the gift that satisfies hungers beyond the body's needs. He's still doing that with us. We mustn't think we've got it made, or that we have no more to learn. Jesus' crowd was overwhelmed at being fed and got the wrong message. Jesus escaped from the enthusiasm that wanted to make him king. He went off into the hills, soaking himself in his Father's presence and joined his disciples by walking on the water. Our Sunday readings miss out this important prayer time. He was preparing to teach the crowds more about himself, the Bread of Life. He would have no illusions about how it would be received.

People were intrigued by Jesus. They'd never met or heard anyone like him and they wanted to know more. Hopefully we're just the same. Their questions and ours seek to know what must be done. Many of us grew up with a catalogue of rights and wrongs, things to do and not to do. Above all he says, 'You must believe in the one God has sent'.

Fascinations should lead us into finding out more about our 'down to earth God'. We want what He brings. We apprentice ourselves to his lifestyle to become identifiable followers. Our relationship with him, strong or faltering, must shape how we think, spend time deliberately in his company, and report back to Him. He's our bread when we're hungry and when we're not. Our strength and direction come from him. We're nurtured and fed by where we put him in our life.

The Lord uses bread as a way into our understanding and imagination. Bread nourishes and sustains us, the staff of life. He taught us to ask Our Father for our daily bread - what gets us from dawn to dusk. But he goes further. Since the Last Supper he feeds us intimately, physically, visually and deeply in our Spirit when we're offered 'The Body of Christ' and we nod or manage to speak a grateful 'Amen'.

(Escomb Partnership Note)

Please pray for all the sick

Eileen Brownbridge, Mary Eales, Cathy Bolton, Jean Bolton, Eileen Walsh, Pauline McCormack, Lynda Whelbourn, Claire, Phyllis Musgrave, Terry Cheesmond, Savannah Philips, Janet Holmes, Raymond Lowey, Julie Kirkbride, Helen Hall, Vilna Woolhead, Doris Irwin, John Regan, Elaine McCartney, Joan Hartnell, John Garnham, Frank Morrell, Coulson family, Jamie Spence, Alfie Pennington, Suzanne Winship, Jim Antoncich, Lilian Wright.

Saint Mary,
Saint Thomas,
All Saints,
Sacred Heart,
Saint Joseph,

Aycliffe
Shildon
Ferryhill
Chilton
Coundon



All are welcome
in all of our
churches —
no exceptions!

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31 July / 1 August 2021: Sunday 18 B



Are we bread for the world?

Jesus offers us his own life. We receive his nourishment whenever we act from faith and love of him. His love, his death on the cross, is life-giving and we should always live in that love. The nourishment that Jesus promises is not for selfish satisfaction but is offered for the world, challenging us to live out the gospel in a Jesus-like way. Those challenging Jesus for a sign fail to recognise that he is the sign. He invites, but does not compel, faith in himself. The only sign we need is Jesus himself and he is close, offering a new horizon, nourishing life in so many ways and circumstances: through his love, presence, guidance and teaching; through his healing, forgiveness and mercy; through his generosity, compassion and wisdom. This is nourishment for the soul. Jesus is giving us the recipe to become as he is, to become the bread of life for the world. Through him something in us gets leavened, rises and becomes bread. How do we nourish others?

31	12.00	Aycliffe	Pat Dolphin (RIP)
July	16.00	Shildon	Nicola Zarraba and Myra Ridley (A)
	17.30	Aycliffe	Our parish family
	18.00	Chilton	Patricia Russ
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Private Intention (MAR)
1	10.00	Aycliffe	Jennie Gayson (RIP)
Aug	10.30	Ferryhill	Edith Robinson
	<u>13.00</u>	Aycliffe	Polish community mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Jim and Ella Deary

The bread that satisfies

Everyone has hunger for material food and cravings for varieties in the foods we eat. These yearnings and cravings get satisfied at the moment we get what we desire. The cravings of a pregnant woman, which change indiscriminately, demonstrate the reality of our insatiable yearnings. Indeed, variety is the spice of life. We will continue to crave for material goods like food and water, and this craving never gets permanently satisfied even if we overfeed ourselves. These cravings keep us active, competitive and prospective. Yearnings keep life going. But what can we do to put a permanent stop to every kind of yearning? What kind of food satisfies every hunger? Jesus rebuked the crowd for misunderstanding the miracle of the loaves. They were fed with the loaves and they were satisfied with some excess remaining. Now they are hungry again because they only ate the food and lost the message. So they followed Jesus to get a refill, to satisfy their momentary hunger. Jesus used this opportunity to draw their attention to the lesson of that miracle which calls us to be compassionate and considerate. Jesus showed his compassion by offering them the loaves available, he demonstrated to them that by being considerate, we can share every resource equitably and still have surplus. These lessons were forgotten because whenever we are interested in satisfying our personal hunger, our selfishness consumes every milk of consideration and kindness in us. We focus on satisfying ourselves without minding what happens to the other person. Insatiable yearnings can make us selfish and greedy.

Remember the story of three friends that discovered a big box of treasure in a jungle. They decided to celebrate their great feat and bid farewell to poverty because the value of the treasure is too big to satisfy all their wants in life. So they sent the youngest one to go get some drinks for this mini-party. This young fellow poisoned the drink with the hope of having the entire treasure to himself when his friends die. His waiting friends agreed to kill him as soon as he got back so that he would not be part of the sharing. They killed their friend on his return and died themselves after drinking the poisoned drink he brought. They all lost the treasure that would have lasted them all through life because they lost the real treasure of compassion and consideration.

Jesus challenges us to seek God's kingdom first. This kingdom is not about eating and drinking to satisfy momentary yearnings. It is about righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Craving for material goods without righteousness, manifests the worst in us. The Israelites blasphemed at the instance of such cravings. But Jesus wants us to eat the real bread that gives life, the communion that brings us together, makes us share with others. This is that bread that comes from heaven, the bread of goodwill that makes every yearning cease.

(Pause and Ponder with Fr. Anthony C. Ohaekwusi)

Diocesan vacancies (0191 243 3301): Caritas Refugee **Project Worker** based in Newcastle. Mon, Wed and Fri, 10am – 2pm. 12-month fixed term contract. Closing date 12 August.

Lay **University Chaplain**, Sunderland. Full-time, term-time. Closing date 11 August.

This week-end:

Collection of refugee biscuits & tomatoes etc.

The sisters of **St Elisabeth Convent, Belarus**, will be at the masses at Aycliffe, Shildon on Saturday, Aycliffe on Sunday afternoon, and Coundon on Monday morning to offer for sale **icons and other religious items**.

This week

Mon	09.30	Coundon	Joseph and Sarah Lee
2	09.40	Aycliffe	Rosary
Aug	10.00	Aycliffe	St Elisabeth Convent
Tue	09.15	Ferryhill	David Swanson
3	09.45	Aycliffe	Morning Prayer
Aug	10.00	Aycliffe	Lilian Wright (sick)
	13.30	Coundon	Exposition and Rosary
	19.00	Aycliffe	Prayer Group
	19.00	Coundon	Exposition and Rosary.
Wed	09.15	Ferryhill	James McMenomy
4	09.40	Shildon	Rosary
Aug	10.00	Shildon	Margery Harrop
Thu	09.30	Coundon	Lionel and Agnes Ames
5	10.00	Aycliffe	Tom Burke
Aug	19.00	Aycliffe	Exposition
Fri	09.30	Coundon	Price and Saunders families
6	10.00	Aycliffe	No intention requested
Aug	11.30	Aycliffe	Requiem mass
Sat	09.30	Coundon	Bobby Stewart
7	12.00	Aycliffe	Brian Meek (LD)
Aug	16.00	Shildon	Michael Degnan RIP
	17.30	Aycliffe	Jim Alliston RIP
	18.00	Chiton	Paul, Eric and Kathleen Wilkinson
Sun	09.00	Coundon	Joseph and Sarah Lee
8	10.00	Aycliffe	Our parish family
Aug	10.30	Ferryhill	John and Norah Costello
	11.30	Ferryhill	Baptism Willow Waterworth
	<u>13.00</u>	Aycliffe	Polish community mass
	18.00	Aycliffe	Joe Duffy RIP

Sunday 19B

Understandably, many people found it difficult to accept the teaching of Jesus about Himself as the Bread of Life. Most of us have been brought up with the idea of Holy Communion as the Body and Blood of Jesus, and for us it is Holy Communion that we understand first, and only later come, hopefully, to a deeper awareness of the Real Presence. For the people of Jesus' day, they knew him first as one of their neighbours; this was a big step, but a step well worth the effort.