

REFLECTION

As we move through the Easter season, the Scripture readings help to deepen our understanding of what happened to Jesus and to the Church through his triumph over death.

On this Fourth Sunday of Easter, we encounter the Good Shepherd who is the beautiful or noble shepherd who knows his flock intimately. "Good Shepherd Sunday" is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

In all three liturgical cycles the Fourth Sunday of Easter presents a passage from John's Gospel about the Good Shepherd.

In the Old Testament, God himself is represented as the shepherd of his people. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" [Ps 22:1]. "He is our God and we are his people whom he shepherds" [Ps 94:7]. The future Messiah is also described in shepherd imagery: "Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; he gathers the lambs in his arms, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care" [Is 40:11].

This ideal image of the shepherd finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ. He is the "Good Shepherd" who goes in search of the lost sheep; he feels compassion for the people because he sees them "as sheep without a shepherd" [Mt 9:36]; he calls his disciples "the little flock" [Lk 12:32]. Peter calls Jesus "the shepherd of our souls" [1 Pt 2:25] and the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of him as "the great shepherd of the sheep" [Heb 13:20].

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me." The sheep remained for many years in the company of the shepherd who knew the character of each one and gave them affectionate names. Thus it is with Jesus and his disciples: he knows his disciples "by name," intimately. He loves them with a personal love that treats each as if they were the only one who existed for him.

The sheep are far more than a responsibility to the Good Shepherd: they are the object of the shepherd's love and concern. Thus, the shepherd's devotion to them is completely unselfish; the Good Shepherd is willing to die for the sheep rather than abandon them.

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OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION Parish Newsletter

4th Sunday of Easter, Year A
7th May 2017

SUNDAY MASSES

BROADFORD:
6pm Vigil

PORTREE
Sunday 10 am

DORNIE
Sunday 12:45pm

MONDAY,
1pm Portree

TUESDAY,
No Mass

WEDNESDAY,
10:30am Portree

THURSDAY,
12:10pm Broadford

FRIDAY,
10:30am Portree

CONFESSION
before and after Mass
And on request

SATURDAY,
6pm Broadford

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, so let us pray for Emmanuel and Ronald, as they continue their studies, and also for Philip, who will soon decide whether to apply for the priesthood. Let us keep praying for Vocations, that more men will hear the voice of Jesus calling them to serve Him in the Priesthood.

At our discussion group last week, we decided it would be a good idea to show the film, "I, Daniel Blake", in the parish, to give the opportunity for another social evening like we had when Philip was here, as well as to highlight the ongoing problem faced by so many in our society who need to resort to foodbanks to survive. We will have this on Monday 15th May at 6pm. Please bring a plate of food, and some items for the foodbank.

We will have another discussion group meeting this Wednesday, same time, after Mass. This week we will read Chapter 11, "On the Fall of Man".

Portree Church of Scotland are organising an afternoon tea on Saturday 13th May, from 2:30 to 4pm, to which all are welcome. It is 'a chance to fellowship and chat with fellow Christians of different outlooks. Bring a friend'

The Wee Boxes are all counted, and banked, and all the money is on its way to SCIAF. With the Wee Boxes, the Lent collection and various one-off donations, (both Skye and Dornie) we have sent £3354.20 to SCIAF this year. This is an amazing level of generosity. Thank you very much.

As you may or may not know (I didn't find out till this week) the paper Bank of England £5 note is now no longer legal tender. They can still be taken to banks for exchange with another for a few weeks, but you can't use them in shops any more, and please do not put them in the collection. Thanks very much.

MUSIC FOR MASS

Entrance:	175	Hail Redeemer, King divine
Psalm	488	The King of love
Offertory:	54	Bind us together
Communion:	317	Make me a channel of your peace
Recessional:	220	I'll sing a hymn to Mary

A Pastoral letter for Good Shepherd Sunday, from Bishop John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday and is our Church's World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated life.

The priests in our diocese call Easter time the Confirmation Season because over a thousand children from our parish communities come to our Cathedral to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. I love visiting our Primary Schools at this time and meeting our teachers and young ones and, like Pope Francis does, I encourage them to ask me whatever question they like. As you can imagine they ask anything and I am often caught unawares and we have a great laugh. One question is what is the best bit of being a Bishop? Is it having the chance to meet the Pope or other famous people?

My answer is that, for me, the best bit of being a bishop, the best bit of being a priest and the best bit of being a member of the Church is getting the chance to sit quietly and restfully before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. No matter what is going on in my life or how busy I am I try to spend half an hour every day with Jesus there. It's the best bit of being a bishop and of my daily journey of faith.

Over the years I have prayed in hundreds of churches all over the world and found peace spending time before the Blessed Sacrament. Whether I got to Jesus worried about a sick priest or our diocesan finances or our young people I always find strength and comfort in His Presence in the Tabernacle.

In the Gospel Jesus calls Himself a Shepherd but he also speaks about gatekeepers. He says the gatekeeper opens the gate for the Shepherd, lets Him go in and out freely and supports Him in His ministry and mission. The gatekeeper makes sure the gates are open and the obstacles are removed from His path.

I think our priests are like Jesus' gatekeepers. When they celebrate the Sacraments or pray for us or give good witness in their lives they prepare the way for Jesus, our Shepherd, to come into our world and our lives. They do not just open the gates of our church buildings but also the gates of our hearts.

Please join with me in praying every day before the gates of our Tabernacles that more young men will join in this precious task and that we will be blessed with good, generous and gifted 'gatekeepers' for generations ahead. Pray also for our young women to give themselves to Jesus as sisters in the religious life because we need good sisters them just as much as priests and already a few are coming to talk to me about the religious life. I am delighted at this.

I should add that the second best bit of being a bishop is ordaining young men to be priests and seeing young women consecrated as religious sisters and watching all of them serve you with love, generosity and compassion.

Please be sure of my prayers and blessings,
+John