



# focus on sunday



FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Day of Prayer for Vocations) 21st April 2024

Today is a day of prayer to deepen our own sense of vocation, and to pray to the Lord to call men and women into a life of ministry and service within religious life.



## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.  
And with your spirit.  
Lift up your hearts.  
We lift them up to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right and just.

## SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of  
the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

## AFTER THE CONSECRATION

*The mystery of faith.*  
Save us, Saviour of the world,  
for by your Cross and Resurrection  
you have set us free.

## INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, .....  
Lord, I am not worthy that you  
should enter under my roof, but only say  
the word and my soul shall be healed.

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Good Shepherd has risen,  
who laid down his life for his sheep  
and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd,  
and be pleased to settle in eternal  
pastures the sheep you have redeemed  
by the Precious Blood of your Son.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

## CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord be with you.  
And with your spirit.  
Keep your family, we pray, O Lord,  
in your constant care, so that, under  
your protection, they may be free from  
all troubles and by good works show  
dedication to your name.  
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*  
And may the blessing of almighty God, the  
Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you  
for ever. *Amen.*

Go in peace.  
Thanks be to God.



The Good Shepherd is one of the most ancient Christian symbols: a mural found in the second-century Roman catacombs of St Calixtus is believed to be the earliest example of Christian art. The metaphor of shepherd for ruler was used

widely in pre-Christian writings, but today's Gospel sees Jesus imbuing the role with complex and contradictory characteristics. The Shepherd is also the sacrificial Lamb: in this one Gospel chapter, the phrase 'he lays down his life for his sheep' occurs ten times. And this act of surrender, born out of love for his flock, becomes an act of triumph, as he takes up his life again, echoing the journey from cross to Resurrection. In John's Gospel, the washing of feet replaces the Last Supper narrative, and the loving shepherd allegory corroborates Christ's servant leadership, while the declaratory "I am" utterance follows the Scriptural pattern of divine self-revelation.

The word 'pastor' has long been used to denote ordained leaders, and in 2013 Pope Francis urged priests: "Be shepherds with the smell of the sheep". The sheep in today's Gospel are astute, intelligent beings: they recognise the true Messiah. With Christ as the true Shepherd of us all, lay and ordained, we may ask ourselves on this Vocations Sunday: what call(s) am I answering in my life? What voices am I listening to? Who and what am I choosing to be led by, as the voice of God calls out to be heard, shepherding us to safety, comfort, and hope.

Giovanna Feeley, DCU, Liturgical Musicologist & Writer

## *Jesus' Story*

*Fr. Liam Hickey*



Bernadette was a little girl from Lourdes. She minded sheep. Our Lady from Heaven brought her messages about helping sick people. Bernadette was a "good shepherd." She did her work well. The Lady asked her to find special water to bless sick and worried people. The water flows today from a big rock called The Grotto, where people bless, pray and light candles.

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.**

**GREETING**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **And with your spirit.**

**PENITENTIAL ACT**

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

*May almighty God have mercy on us.... Amen.*

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**THE GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father have mercy on us; For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns....

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**FIRST READING Acts 4: 8 - 12**

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles** Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene

perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

**The word of the Lord.**  
*Thanks be to God.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**Ps. 117:1. 8-9. 21-23. 26. 28-29**

**R. The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. or Alleluia!**

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.  
It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in men:  
it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. (R)

2. I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour.  
The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.  
This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes. (R)

3. Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes.  
We bless you from the house of the Lord; I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour.  
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his love has no end. (R)

**SECOND READING 1 John 3: 1-2**

**A reading from the first letter of St. John** Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

**The word of the Lord.**  
*Thanks be to God.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my own sheep and my own know me. Alleluia!



**GOSPEL John 10: 11 - 18**

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to John**

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do

scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

**The Gospel of the Lord.**  
*Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

**APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, *All bow for following two lines:* who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.



**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

**Pray brothers and sisters.....**  
May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly