

Reflection for the 4th Sunday of Easter

Sunday, 3rd May 2020

If you do not have a copy of the missalette, you can find today's readings at www.universalis.com

This Sunday is often referred to as *Good Shepherd Sunday*. Each year we listen to a different extract from John chapter 10, where Jesus uses the image of the Good Shepherd.

In the Israel of Jesus, just as in this part of Lancashire, rearing sheep was a vital part of the economy. The images Jesus uses, and the parables he tells us, are always drawn from his experience of everyday life.

The image of the shepherd in the Old Testament goes back to King David. When the prophet Samuel called at the house of Jesse to anoint the new King of Israel, he rejected all of the other sons and called for the boy David to be summoned from looking after the sheep. David always saw the connection - going from caring for sheep in the fields to caring for God's people. Also drawing from his own experience, David composed the famous 23rd Psalm: *The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want...*

Today, the focus of the Gospel is the image of Jesus as being the gate to the sheepfold. He is the one we need to go through to get access to pastureland. Jesus realises that there will be others who will claim to be the way to happiness, but only through Jesus can we find the way to deep and lasting peace.

By now I'm sure each and every one of us has been touched by the death of someone we have known and loved. It is a comfort to us and to their families that Jesus is the gate through which our departed friends and relatives will pass to take their place in the resurrection of the dead. Our pain of loss is tempered by our faith and the sure hope of a life to come, unhindered by the scars of sin. However, Jesus is not just our gateway to another life beyond this one. He is also the gateway to a better life in the here and now.

Many people are getting fed up of the lockdown and the restrictions on our activities and movements. Some are impatient for this to be over, so that they can get back to the way things used to be. I'm sure that this current crisis will change the lives of all of us for ever. The "normal" we go back to will be different from the "normal" we used to have. The new normal will be better in some respects to the old one, but in other respects it might be a retrograde step. If we pass through Jesus as our gateway to the future, we can be assured that it will be better.

In the new normal there will be less travel for business meetings and recreation. Bad news for the aviation industry, but good news for the planet. Just over the last month or so there has been a drastic reduction in carbon emissions. Our planet has been given the chance to breathe. In future, lots of meetings will take place electronically. Some people might even think: Well I don't need to go to Mass this morning, I can just watch a celebration on line. Inevitably, in the future, people will become less directly connected.

Before the Vatican Council, people went on a Sunday to "hear" Mass. While the priest, assisted by his altar server, got on with his Mass with his back to the congregation, the faithful got on with their own prayers from the Sunday Missal or they said the rosary. The grace the Council gave us was a sense of us having an active part to play in the celebration of Mass. It's not a private devotion of the priest alone, it is the realisation of our identity as brothers and sisters who all have a place at the table. Being physically present to each other is an essential constituent of our being part of the flock.

When we look at how the world will inevitably change in the future, we can do so using the prism of our faith in Jesus, the gateway through which we pass. Jesus would want us to gather each Sunday, and not just for important events like baptisms, weddings and funerals. The way in which we have been looking out for each other during the crisis is admirable, and hopefully this mutual care and respect can become part and parcel of the new normal.

Hopefully, over the next week or so the government will be announcing the relaxation of some of our current restrictions. We can take with us the positivity we have experienced during this time and incorporate that into the way we live in the future. As Vera Lynn said: "We'll meet again!"

St Peter's/St Joseph's Bidding Prayers

2nd / 3rd May 2020

Priest:

Jesus is the gate to the sheepfold. We need to go through him to find our way to the Father. We make these prayers to assist us on our journey.

Reader:

We pray for those who lead and guide God's people. Through their wise teaching and example of a life of service may they keep the flock united.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for those who are unwell at the moment. We remember too those who are tending to their needs.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for those who are stressed or depressed. May the Lord show us how we can lift each other's spirits.

Lord in your mercy.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, we pray for more vocations for our church. May the Lord inspire many young people to desire to serve the church of the future.

Lord in your mercy.

We commend to the loving mercy of God those who have died recently, especially Gordon Nicholson and Elizabeth Copley. We pray also for those whose anniversaries occur at about this time: May they all rest in the peace of the Lord.

Lord in your mercy.

The current crisis gives us more time that we can use for prayer and meditation. Let us listen to the Lord and how he might be inviting us to use this time.

[After a pause]

Lord in your mercy.

Mary taught Jesus how to observe and respect nature. Let us ask her to intercede on our behalf.

Hail Mary....

Priest:

We have made our prayers knowing that God listens to us. We present them to the risen Lord Jesus, for he lives now and forever.

Amen.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

(with St Joseph's, Hurst Green)

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3rd May 2020

THE NEWSLETTER

4th Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Mass Schedule for this week

Fr Tim will offer a private Mass each day for the following intentions

Date	Time	Fr Tim's Private Mass Intention	Feast
Sa 2 nd		Elizabeth Copley L	Vigil of 4 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
Su 3 rd		For the parish	4 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
M 4 th		Private Intention	Feast of the English Martyrs
T 5 th		Adrian Aylward L	Weekday in the Easter Season
W 6 th		Frank Worden L	Weekday in the Easter Season
Th 7 th		For SMH	Weekday in the Easter Season
F 8 th		(Patrick) Kevin Synnott L	Weekday in the Easter Season

(No Holy Hour or Benediction until further notice.)

L = Lately Dead, A = Anniversary of Death, R = Remembrance

M = Martyr, V = Virgin, B = Bishop, Pp = Pope

P = Personal Intention, S = Sick, B = Birthday F = Founders Mass

D = Doctor, P = Priest, R = Religious

Please pray for the following, the anniversary of whose deaths occur at this time: Lucy Platt, Francis Burns, Mona Moon, Joseph Bolton, Henry Holden, Fr John Bridges SJ, William Mather and John Wilcock. *May they rest in peace.*

Readings at Mass

	4 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)	5 th Sunday of Easter
First	Acts 2; 14, 36 - 41	Acts 6; 1 - 7
Second	I Peter 2; 20 - 25	I Peter 2; 4 - 9
Gospel	John 10; 11 - 18	John 14; 1 - 12

Diocesan Website:

<http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk>

for information on our Diocese and what is happening.

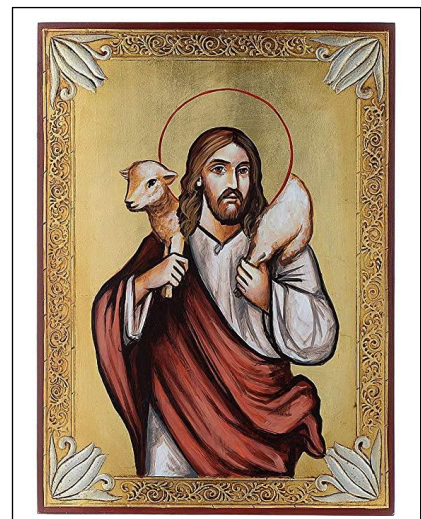
Rest in Peace

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Gordon Nicholson** who died peacefully at home on Tuesday. Please keep his family in your prayers as well. May he rest in peace.

Praying with the Pope in May 2020

We pray that deacons, faithful in their service of the word, and the poor, may be an invigorating influence in the church.

Look at www.ThePopeVideo.org for more information



The sheep follow him because they know his voice.

We shall continue to send out the newsletter until we are able to gather again in church. Together with other resources, it is also available on line on the parish website and in the parish resources box by the Cenotaph.

Corona Virus Latest

We are looking forward to the time when we can once more open our churches and chapels for private prayer and Mass. In the meantime, remember your home is a sacred space as well.

Fr Tim's availability

Each day Fr Tim will be in the Parish Office from 9am to 10am and available on the parish number (01254 826268).

At other times, leave a message on the parish answer machine, which will be responded as soon as possible.

A daily prayer sheet is now available on-line and in the box by the cenotaph in the village.

Resources for children

There are lots of resources for Children – try googling “Children’s Liturgy Fourth Sunday of Easter” and choose something relevant to your age group. It’s important we remember the young ones.

Live Streaming of Mass

Many people have been able to find a Mass on line. Jesuit parishes that do this are Farm Street, Southall and the Oxford Chaplaincy. You can also try www.churchservices.tv.

Buddies

The “buddies” system seems to be working well. Knowing that someone will call every day is a great way to combat loneliness. If you need a buddy, or help with anything else, please contact Fr Tim!

Today

Is the Fourth Sunday of Easter. In the Gospel Jesus uses the image of the sheep gate as a means of access to the fold. Through Jesus we find our way to the Father. It is the day when we pray especially for vocations to the priesthood. We need priests for a totally new kind of church! Fr Tim will be celebrating his private Mass at 5.30pm on Saturday in St Peter’s and 9.30am on Sunday in St Joseph’s.

Rosary Group

A group of parishioners will be saying the rosary each Wednesday during May at 7.30pm through Zoom. We had a try out last Wednesday, to help us master the technology. If you would like to join this group, let Fr Tim know and he will send you the link.

Funeral for Gordon Nicholson

Takes place on Friday at 11am in St Joseph’s Cemetery with the *immediate family only*. However, the funeral cortege will pass along Avenue Road at 10.50am on Friday. Those who wish to pay their respects may line the route from the Cenotaph to the cemetery, taking care to keep social distance. A memorial Mass will be held when we can gather once more.

Celebrating VE Day

Friday is the 75th anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe). I would have loved to invite everyone to a Mass to celebrate this day, but we can do all this at home! Fr Tim will write a special reflection for this day.

Next Sunday

Is the Fifth Sunday of Easter. At the Last Supper, Jesus reveals himself to his disciples as the Way, the Truth and the Light.

New Head Teacher for St Joseph’s Primary.

Moya Smith, the head at St Joseph’s Primary, has resigned. The governors of our primary school are seeking to appoint a new head teacher from September 2020. If you, or someone you know, might be interested, please search *Lancashire Teaching Jobs* for a job specification and an application form. We extend our thanks to Moya.

Prayers please

Sadly the first priest of the Salford Diocese has died, Fr Paul Dillon, who was parish priest in Whalley. Please keep him in your prayers. His death was not Covid related.

Book of remembrance and prayer

Fr Tim has opened a book of remembrance and prayer for those connected with the parish and the Stonyhurst/SMH community who are sick or who have passed away. If you would like some names to be added to this book, please let Fr Tim know. They will be remembered at Mass every day.