

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter [Good Shepherd Sunday] 2024

[Acts 4: 8-12; Psalm 117; 1 John 3:1-25; John 10:11-18]

*“For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only name by which we can be saved.”* These words used by St Peter to the Rulers and the people and the elders in Jerusalem are an extraordinary expression of faith. These words spoken with confidence because he was filled with the Holy Spirit, are a perfect preamble for the Gospel we hear today.

In the Gospel of St John, where Jesus declares himself to be the Good Shepherd, and which we hear every year on this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, is a declaration of absolute and unconditional love. Jesus states that he is being prepared to give up his life for his followers and uses the profession of a shepherd as an example. For us, it is inconceivable that a shepherd would sacrifice their own life to protect their sheep. But Jesus is no ordinary Shepherd, **He is the Good Shepherd.**

Jesus, being prepared to sacrifice himself for us is the greatest act of love which has ever happened; or which will ever happen. Jesus Christ true God and true Man, lowering himself to become one of his own creations and allowing himself to be killed by his own creations so that He could demonstrate that death has no power over Him and that if we follow Him; then death has no lasting power over us.

That is why the second reading used today is also a perfect fit. The Gospel speaks of the greatest love and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading we hear St John tell us about the love bestowed upon us by the Father by allowing us to be called children of God. But that is not the best bit. Through our baptism we are children of God, but what we are to become has still to be revealed, because *“we shall be like him”* and *“see him as he really is.”* By trusting in Jesus, by following him, having faith in him and by loving him, only then we can achieve all that the Good Shepherd calls us to. That eternal pasture where there will be no more mourning or tears; a place filled with love, a place of perfection.

This Sunday we are asked to pray for our brothers and sisters who the Good Shepherd has called to a life of service. That calling or vocation could be to serve the Lord as a priest, a deacon, a religious sister or brother. It could be a calling to be a nurse or a doctor, it could be to be a teacher or maybe even a scientist who finds a medical cure or the key to solving the climate crisis.

A vocation can be a mighty calling, or it can be a calling to do one simple thing. Whatever that calling is, if it is from God, it has to be answered. We know that Jesus called the disciples and they followed Him. Today in 2024, **we are his disciples, we are followers of Jesus.** Everyone of us, whether we are young or old, we need to listen for what we are being called to do and more importantly, to respond. We also need to pray that we and our brothers and sisters can have the courage to answer that call and by doing so, help to build the kingdom of God.

### Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

CCC 754, 764, 2665: Christ the Shepherd and Gate

CCC 553, 857, 861, 881, 896, 1558, 1561, 1568, 1574: Pope and bishops as shepherds

CCC 874, 1120, 1465, 1536, 1548-1551, 1564, 2179, 2686: priests as shepherds

CCC 756: Christ the cornerstone

CCC 1, 104, 239, 1692, 1709, 2009, 2736: we are God's children now

### **Please keep in your prayers this week**

- Those who are sick, those recovering from surgery, those who are dying, the recently deceased and those who mourn.
- Those contemplating a vocation.
- Those in formation for the Diaconate or the Priesthood or for the consecrated life.
- The innocent people caught up in wars and conflicts around the world, but especially those in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq.
- Those who have suffered from abuse, those who struggle to see themselves as being of value and those who care for them.
- Josephine, Onu & Sofiri who will be baptised this weekend at St Bede's.

Deacon Tony Darroch 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024.