

Fourth Sunday of Easter 2026

(Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:20b-25; John 10 1-10)

More than 30 years ago, while I was working in Glasgow as a plumber, I was tasked to repair a burst pipe in a Crematorium. It was not a domestic size pipe, and the job was compounded by the fact that we had to work in between services. It seemed like every time we heard *'The Lord's my Shepherd'* we could start sawing and hammering again. As the job lasted a couple of days, we must have heard it at least 8 times, as well as other music of course. "*The Lord's my Shepherd*" comes from Psalm 23, often called the Shepherd Psalm—the most beloved of all the Psalms. People love it for good reason. It speaks of green pastures and still waters and restored souls. But more than that, it speaks of an all-knowing, all-powerful shepherd who devotes full attention to our care and feeding. It assures us of God's loving presence in our lives, both now and forevermore.¹ It is also the psalm used today; a day when we hear Jesus tell us in the Gospel that He is the gate by which, we, his flock need to enter.

The image of sheep and shepherds is one which the Jews of Jesus' time would be familiar. The prophets used the image of sheep and shepherds to describe the relationship between the people and their leaders in ancient times (see Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-31; Zechariah 10:2-3 and 11:4-17)². Israel/Palestine at that time was a rough and stony pastureland and shepherds moving their sheep would have been a common sight. Sheep were kept mainly for wool rather than for their meat and the shepherd would herd them for many years. The sheepfold was a yard or an enclosure where sheep were kept, especially overnight, only the sheep and the shepherds entered by the gate of the sheepfold; the sheepfold was a place of safety. The sheep knew their shepherd's voice because he had protected them for several years, so when they were in the sheepfold with other flocks, they would respond to their shepherd and remain with their own flock.³

The Gospel used today is the turning point of John's Gospel; we are moving away from the signs Jesus gave, and we start to move towards the Passion of Jesus. This passage follows immediately after the passage where Jesus has cured the blind man. The blind man who became a follower of Jesus and who testified for Jesus under interrogation by the Pharisees. The blind man listened to Jesus' voice; he obeyed Jesus and then followed him to find better pastures. Within today's Gospel we hear a phrase from Jesus twice "***truly, truly, I say to you,***" this phrase indicates ***Jesus' formal teaching'*** and in this case it is aimed against the Pharisees who had rejected and expelled the cured blind man from the temple.⁴ The blind man was cured of physical and spiritual blindness because he heard the voice of the Good

¹ [The Lord's My Shepherd – Sermon Writer](#)

² Francis J Maloney, S.D.B., *Sacra Pagina- The Gospel of John*, (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1998)301.

³ Richard A Burridge, *John, The People's Bible Commentary*, (The Bible Reading Fellowship, Oxford, 1998)132-3.

⁴ Robert Draper, *Breaking the Word Sundays*, (The Pastoral Review Vol 16 Issue 2, Twickenham, 2020)80.

Shepherd and he obeyed. In this teaching Jesus is pointing towards the Pharisees, highlighting their *spiritual blindness* and calling them thieves and brigands, telling the people that if you follow these men who refuse to believe in Jesus despite all of the signs Jesus has already given in the previous 9 chapters of John's Gospel, then you will be lost.

Some time ago, I watched an episode of Countryfile on BBC. It was a lambing special and one of the first things the shepherd did when the lamb was born was to separate the ewe and her lambs from the other members of the flock to help them get to know the sound and the smell of each other. It was explained that when they are back in the flock it would be very easy for the lamb and the ewe to become separated and if that was to happen out in the fields then the lamb would soon go hungry as it was unlikely that any other ewe would allow a strange lamb to feed from her.

In a similar way, when we are growing in faith we need to learn which voices to listen to; **will we listen to those who lead us astray or will we find the correct voices which will nourish our faith?** Helping us to grow to maturity in faith so that we are able to listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd when he calls us towards the gates of His Heavenly sheepfold?

Good Shepherd Sunday is held every year on the 4th Sunday of Easter. It is a reminder to us that God calls each one of us to serve in different ways to build up His Kingdom. Some of us are called to marriage, some to the single life, others are called to the Priesthood or the Religious life. I happen to have been called to two vocations, my first is my marriage to Pam and my second vocation is to the Permanent Diaconate. Everything I do in my vocation as a deacon has to come from the *fruits of my Marriage vocation*.

If you feel God is calling you to the Priesthood or the Diaconate, have a chat with one of the priests or deacons in the Pastoral Area. If you are thinking of getting married have a chat to a couple you know who have been married for a while and make sure you get onto a Marriage Preparation Course; there are loads out there. If you want to live a Sacramental Marriage, make sure your preparation is based on strong Christian principles.

Jesus is asking us all to learn His voice and to follow it. **What is our Good Shepherd calling you to do?** Listen to Him and follow.

Further Reading

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 14, 189, 1064, 1226, 1236, 1253-1255, 1427-1429: conversion, faith, and baptism
CCC 618, 2447: Christ an example in bearing wrongs⁵

[The Lord's My Shepherd – Sermon Writer](#)

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- Those who have completed and those who continue with the RCIA programme; especially those who received the Sacraments of Initiation this Easter.
- The young people preparing for Confirmation in our Pastoral Area.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- Riccardo, who will be Baptised this weekend at St Bede's.
- The success of the current Called & Gifted programme.
- All those in formation for the Priesthood, Diaconate or Consecrated Life.
- Those engaged to be married.

Deacon Tony

24th April 2026

⁵ [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)