



St John Boste Parish, West Durham

Esh, Esh Winning, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor

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Hospital R C Chaplain Father Paul Tully Tel. (01388) 818544

Please telephone the Chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.



Fourth Sunday of Easter: 3 May 2020

'Good Shepherd Sunday'

The Good Shepherd: The gospel of John was written towards the end of the first century, perhaps sixty years or so after the death of Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John lived in different places and each belonged to their own local faith communities. Like all the gospels, this book of John's sought to say something about what the Christian community *had now* come to believe about Jesus. In today's passage from the gospel, John has Jesus telling two

parable stories, both about the shepherd's relationship with his sheep. So, to set the scene, imagine a circular wall made of stones. The shepherd would lead his sheep inside that wall to keep them safe overnight. Sheep belonging to other shepherds might also be in there for the night. When he slept, he would either personally lie across the entrance, acting as a sort of 'gate' to protect his sheep, or he might pay someone else to look after his sheep. Anyone trying to steal the sheep might need to climb over the wall, but certainly wouldn't enter through the 'gate'. And while the sheep felt comfortable and safe with their own shepherd who probably had pet names for each of them, and would call them by name, they would become agitated in the presence of a stranger. Now, take time to read today's passage carefully, and see what might strike you



'Jesus said to the Jews: "I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock. The gate-keeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice and, one by one, he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him; they do not recognise the voice of strangers." Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them. So, Jesus spoke to them again: "I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands, but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe. He will go freely in and out, and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10: 1-10)

Okay, so any thoughts about this passage? Remember, though, that when John is writing this around 80 -90 AD he is not primarily writing about care of sheep - not in a literal sense. John is talking about leadership, example, one who offers a sense of direction that others may follow. John is aware that some people who *claim* to be appointed by God and have slick religious answers are, in fact, thieves and brigands and self-appointed charlatans. John says that only Jesus is truly a shepherd who is genuinely concerned about each one of us individually, by name. Only Jesus, he suggests, is a shepherd who will lead us and guide us to the things of God, and offer us 'life to the full'. Think now about your own life: are you aware of any ways in which you may be being led to something more profound, more satisfying in your life? Have you felt any satisfaction these past few weeks in making a deliberate attempt to reach out to others? Amidst the isolation and disappointment of not being able to see grandchildren and relatives, have you at any stage felt also some deeper sense of peace, some sense of the presence of God?

Anniversaries:

St Michael's: Catherine Dumighan, Robert Heels, Anne Smart, Pat Hennessy, Norah May Gowland

St Joseph's: Bobby Doyle, Cissy Doyle, Edgar Halpin, Norah Bartlett, Kathleen Avery, Thomas McQuillan, baby Libby Ditchburn, Ron Jackson, Irena Korotash, Catherine Ward, Anthony Joyce, Brian Oliver, Kevin Liddle.

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs: Allan Thompson, Mary Moran, Thomas Keaveney, Stephen Shaw, Charles Sanderson, John Shaw, Michael Condron, Margaret Bell.

Sunday mass:

I am celebrating mass each Sunday in St Joseph's church. At those masses I am deliberately leaving my parish visiting book on the altar with all your names in. In addition, I have a separate list of those who are sick, those people who have died recently, and those who have asked for prayer. That list sits on the altar too.

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

Good Shepherd Sunday: This is a day when, traditionally, we pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Fr Chris Warren is Vocations Director for our diocese and Chris has asked us to include this note in our newsletter:-



..... **To whom shall we go? A Seven Session Discernment Programme for Men Considering Priesthood in Hexham & Newcastle Diocese.** Could Jesus be calling you to be Catholic Priest? Our online course of reflection and discussion is an opportunity to ask that question. Gathering as an online group, we will discuss what it means to discern a vocation, learn a little about the path to priesthood and enjoy fellowship in the process! The course will take place using ZOOM at **7:15pm** on Mondays beginning **Monday 11th May**. To express interest in joining our sessions, or to find out more, please contact Father Christopher Warren at vocations@rcdhn.org.uk The Vocation Team has also produced an online resource for praying the rosary which has gone live today on the Diocesan Website. This has been prepared by seminarians: - <http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/vocations/pdf/2020/Rosary%20for%20Vocations.pdf>



Sunflowers: Cecilia and George Wharton sent me this email recently: *“Almost three weeks ago we received a letter from our daughter in Scotland inviting us to become a member of the tallest Sunflower Competition. Everyone of the*

entire family received the same letter which also contained a packet of sunflower seeds. There are sunflowers being grown throughout the country. It is a competition; needless to say, we are all in it to win!”

Northern Cross: “I hope you enjoyed the free access to our vibrant April edition. *Northern Cross* still needs many more digital subscribers during the present crisis. The closure of our churches results in income being drastically reduced as we are unable to provide printed newspapers. Your support at this time is absolutely vital and would be greatly appreciated. For practical information please look at the following suggestions, or email me, Tom Hoban, at tomhoban67@gmail.com

1. You can subscribe by cheque for £14.40 payable to Northern Cross and post it to: 11 The Grove, Hartlepool TS26 9NB (our office in Darlington is currently closed due to the present emergency)

2. £14.40 by bank transfer to account number **81602292**, sort code **40-43-11** using your surname & postcode as a reference (e.g. Smith TS26 9NB)

Daily readings and Morning and Evening

Prayer: <https://us.magnificat.net/free>

Mass and prayer available online:

<https://mass-online.org/daily-holy-mass-live-online/>



Thoughts... I'd be very happy to hear peoples' thoughts about the Scripture readings each week....! Anything you have found to be new, helpful? Anything that has spoken to your heart?? What about any other books you are reading:

anything you would like to recommend to others?

Masses for the sick and for carers: The Bishops of England and Wales have agreed that every Thursday evening at 7pm a bishop, in turn, will celebrate a live streamed Mass in his Cathedral for all those frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families and for the repose of the souls of the deceased. Next Thursday, 7th May, will be with Bishop Marcus Stock at Leeds Cathedral. Bishop Robert shall be celebrating Mass in our Cathedral in Newcastle on 14th May. This will also be a diocesan day of prayer for the sick, their families, for NHS workers and carers.

Contact: Some parishioners have said they are very happy to keep in touch with others by phone or email. If you would like some contact, please let me know at the Parish Office.

Patients in hospital: Fr Paul Tully is doing a fantastic job in our hospitals at present. He cannot simply 'wander around wards' as he normally does, but he is in there every day offering support to staff, and he very willing to visit any patient who would like to see him. Contact Fr Paul on 01388- 818544, or email frpaultully@outlook.com

Thoughts from two Popes: “As the world slowly recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a risk that it will be struck by an even worse virus - that of selfish indifference. This dangerous virus is spread by the thought that life is better, if it is better *for me*, and that everything will be fine, if it is fine *for me*. It begins there, and ends up selecting one person over another, discarding the poor and sacrificing those left behind on the altar of progress. The pandemic reminds us that there are no differences or borders between those who suffer. We are all frail, all equal, all precious. May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us. The time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family” (Pope Francis)

.... “Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you have tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do” (Pope John XXIII)