

FAITH @Home



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Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!



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Year A 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER (GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY)

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Acts 2:14, 36-41

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 22(23)

Second Reading:

1 Peter 2:20-25

Gospel:

John 10:1-10

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."



James Tissot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we find ourselves with Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Allow yourself some time to contemplate the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Imagine that you are that lamb, nestled close to Him, close enough to hear His gentle voice and the beat of His heart. Stay in that warm and safe space for a time.
- Ask yourself in prayer, what it means for your own personal life to have Jesus as your Shepherd. Do you find it easy to hear His voice? What distractions might you need to remove? What other voices are claiming your attention? Pray for the grace to hear and respond to Him more this week.

Talk

In today's Gospel we see Jesus the Good Shepherd explaining how His sheep know His voice.

- Who are the people in your life who you can recognise just by the sound of their voice, even with just a few words on the phone?
- Whose voice do you love to hear? Maybe you associate good things with that voice, like granny coming to visit!
- How good are you at recognising someone's tone of voice and what that means?
- What kind of tone of voice do you think Jesus speaks to you in?
- Is there space in your home to hear the voice of Jesus, or is there always a lot of noise? Is there a way that, as a family, you could create quiet time to let Jesus speak His word into your hearts?

Family Challenge!

Do something this week that brings you together as a family. Jesus and the Father are totally united, they are as one. What fun activity can you do to unite your family this week - so you can experience life and have it to the full?

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

This fourth Sunday of the Easter season is sometimes called Good Shepherd Sunday because in each of the three lectionary cycles, the Gospel reading invites us to reflect on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In each cycle the reading is from the tenth chapter of John's Gospel. This chapter sets the framework for Jesus' teaching about himself as the Good Shepherd.

Today's reading falls between the stories of Jesus' healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. Both of these stories were proclaimed in the Gospels found in this year's season of Lent. Following the controversy that ensued when Jesus healed the man born blind, Jesus directs his allegory about the sheep and the shepherd toward the Jewish religious leaders of his time, the Pharisees.

Throughout John's Gospel the Pharisees fail to accept Jesus' ministry and teaching. They show themselves to be "robbers and thieves" because they try to lead the sheep without entering through the gate, Jesus. Through these metaphors, Jesus is telling his listeners that those who follow him and his way will find abundant life. He identifies himself both as the shepherd and the gate. The shepherds who are faithful to him are the ones whom the sheep (Jesus' disciples) should follow.

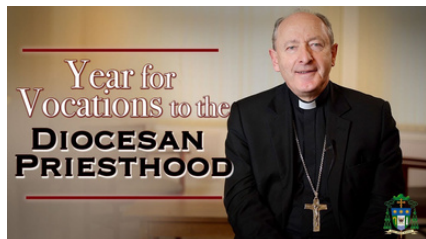
The relationship between the sheep and their shepherd is based on familiarity. Sheep recognize their shepherd and will not follow a stranger. At the end of the day, shepherds lead their sheep from pastures to a common gated area called a sheepfold. There, one shepherd protects all of the sheep until the next day when each shepherd returns to lead his own sheep to pasture. As shepherds move among the sheep, the sheep follow only their shepherd.

Today's Gospel also gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christian leadership. Jesus' words suggest to us that those who will lead the Christian community will be known by their faithfulness to Jesus. The leaders will recognize that Jesus is the gate for all of the sheep and that having a good relationship with Jesus is the primary characteristic of a Christian leader. Jesus' allegory also suggests that faithful Christian leadership requires a good relationship with the community: the shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him. Christian leaders follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by being faithful to him and by being a good shepherd.

taken from **Loyola Press Sunday Connection**

CHECK IT OUT: "Take the Risk for Christ"

YEAR FOR VOCATIONS TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD



Watch Bishop Phonsie explain the year on YouTube

The Year for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood will run from Vocations/Good Shepherd Sunday, 30 April 2023. The Council for Vocations of the Bishops' Conference has organised this year to promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood. The year-long awareness campaign will open on 25 April, the Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist. Over the twelve-month period, it is planned to host events in parishes and at pilgrim sites around the country, and to provide resources for homes and schools.



God is real, active and present in our world!

HEAR AND RESPOND

In today's Gospel Jesus was drawing on a well-known image at the time of a shepherd calling his sheep. We might not have the same familiarity with what He means, but even today in Israel you will find different flocks pasturing together in a sheep fold or scattered throughout the hills, but when their own shepherd calls them they respond to him and follow. It's incredible to see!

How can they know his particular voice? They know their shepherd because they trust him; he provides for them, cares for them, keeps them safe from harm. In fact, he protects him with his own life if necessary, facing down threats like wolves and thieves for their sake.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. That makes baptised Christians, His sheep. He also calls himself the Gate of the sheepfold. The shepherd would lay down at the entrance to the sheepfold to put himself between his sheep and any threat. Jesus showed us he was willing to lay down his life for us on Calvary. But a really important question for us to ask is not just "do we listen to His voice?" but rather, since we have free will, "do we want to listen to His voice?" Do we believe that Jesus knows what is best for us? Do we trust that He will always provide? Do we turn to Him for help and advice? Are we drowning out His voice with other noise or voice?

This week's video from Fr Mark Mary helps us to know how to listen and to know what God is asking us to do. We call that discernment. We can discern the little things as well as the big. Try to put this into practice, starting this week! Try using the prayer below when faced with a difficult or confusing decision and trust in God to guide you.



Fr Mark Mary CFR: Struggling to hear God's Voice



Amanda Lindsey Cook: Still

Check out our To the Heights Youth Newsletter



Family Prayer

Lord Jesus, let our hearts burn within us as we recognise your presence in the Holy Eucharist and in Sacred Scripture. Walk with us each day and draw us closer to you. Amen

EVENTS

Meditating with Mary in the month of May:

3 week Visio Divina series with the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Tues @ Sacred Heart, The Folly - (9th - 23rd May) following 10am Mass. | Thurs @ St. John's, Parnell St. - (11th - 25th May) following the 9:30 Mass | Thurs @ Sts. Joseph & Benildus (4th - 18th of May) 7pm. €5 to cover materials.. Queries: Sr. Kathryn waterford@ascj.us.org 087 404 2784

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock: by bus Under the leadership of Bishop Cullinan, Sun 7th May. Tickets €30. More info on www.waterfordlismore.ie

Family Day: Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House, Sunday 14th May, 10am - 3pm. Bring a packed lunch! Booking is essential: email info@holymission.ie

Catholic Mother's Association Retreat Day: Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House, Saturday May 13th. Contact Sinead for more info at (086) 0528282

The Hook of Faith: Take a Risk for Christ Webinar to launch the 'Year of Vocation for the Diocesan Priesthood' with Mgr. Stephen Rossetti and Bishop Phonsie Cullinan. Friday, May 5, 8.00 pm. E-mail thehookoffaith@gmail.com to register!

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