

Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 3rd May 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter (A) Psalter Week 4

The Parish of the Holy Trinity,
Stroud Green



with
Holy Innocents, Hornsey

Seeking to know and serve God and our local community

Our True Home



Today is known as Good Shepherd Sunday because we always hear Jesus speak about himself as a shepherd in the gospel on the fourth Sunday of Easter.

The idea of Jesus as the caring shepherd is one of the most comforting and memorable in scripture. For many of us that image is likely to be influenced by the illustrations of a clean and rather respectable looking shepherd in the bibles we read as children. In reality shepherds in New Testament times were generally rough, dirty and rather dubious characters, hardly people who were trustworthy. Unless, that is, you were a sheep. In a land where good pasture was not easy to find, the shepherd had a very important role in finding the sheep somewhere they could graze. He probably did 'lead' them and he probably did know each of his sheep quite intimately. He would live close to the sheep, often sharing the same shelter and even sleeping in the gap through which the sheep would pass into the safety of the sheep-pen.

That is why in the gospel today Jesus develops this imagery, and calls himself the gate rather than the shepherd. What the crowd who heard him had failed to grasp is that the intimacy between Jesus and his 'flock' is actually of a completely different order. Jesus is not just leading his people, he really is feeding them in the most important sense of all. He feeds them with His words which are life giving and he will feed us all with his body and blood.

As the 'gate of the sheepfold' he really is the entrance to eternal life. Our safety is not to be found in the sheep-pen *per se* - it comes from being in union with Christ. So when Peter addresses the crowd on the day of Pentecost (first reading) he brings home to the people the fact that Jesus really gives us life, in fact his own life. Dying for us and feeding us are part of one and the same mystery. He is not just 'a good shepherd', he is so self-giving that he sacrifices himself for his sheep as the inevitable outcome of his love and care for them!

Care and safety are things we are all very concerned about at the moment – the safety of the elderly, care workers, NHS staff and our own. We are rightly urged to 'Stay home' to do our best to ensure we save lives. However, today we are reminded to set our sights on the home where our true safety and security come from. They come from living in Christ – the gate of the sheepfold.

Tuesday Easter Groups at 8.00 pm

Throughout Easter, the Sunday and weekday Masses always contain readings from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts is effectively St. Luke's continuation of his Gospel, starting with an account of Jesus' Ascension and ending with St. Paul preaching in Rome. Each Tuesday evening at 8.00 pm during the Easter season we will take a section of the book and, using Zoom, spend 40 minutes looking at some of the main points in it - discussing what they might say to us today.

This Tuesday we will look at the life of the early church. You may want to read Acts 2:42 to 5:42 beforehand. Obviously in the time available we will only be able to look at a couple of points from this section. You will need to email Fr. Patrick for a Zoom meeting ID and password if you do not already have it.

Sunday Zoom Service at 11.30 am - Readings, Prayers followed by a chance to catch up

To take part you will need to have downloaded the *Zoom App* from the internet onto your computer or smart phone, and to open it and click 'Join meeting' at 11.30 am. You will also need to have the meeting codes and passwords available from Fr. Patrick at the phone number or email below.