



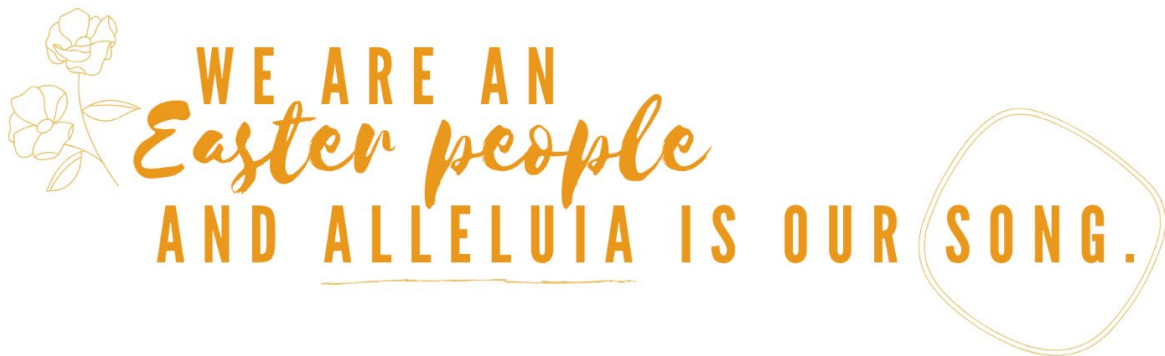
UNITED IN PRAYER

A RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS, & INDIVIDUALS

FOURTH SUNDAY IN EASTER GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

(YEAR A)

3 May 2020



GATHER

BE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT, RECONISING GOD IN OUR MIDST

SET UP A PRAYER SPACE

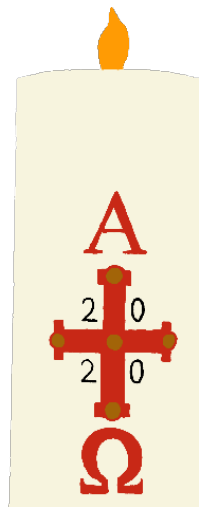
Gather what you can from around your house to create a prayer space or focus for the time of prayer, ideally including a candle (representing the Paschal Candle at Easter).

As you light your candle; pray the following words...

Nau mai haere mai e Hehu Karaiti ko koe te rawhiti o te ao.

Welcome Jesus you are the light of the world.

See our website for a full 'Blessing of Light' Morning Prayer.



SING/LISTEN TO A HYMN

The Lord is my Shepherd – Brian Boniwell

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sZaJpllj_c

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.



PROCLAIM

TIME TO READ THE SCRIPTURES

Here you will find references for this weekend's readings.

While we cannot physically gather for Mass, the Word of God is what can nourish us.

THIS WEEKS READINGS

Open a Bible or visit universalis.com to find the readings.

FIRST READING: Acts 2:14,36-41

God has made him both Lord and Christ

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

You can pray the Psalm by listening along to it sung [here](#).

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:20-25

You have come back to the shepherd of your souls



Good Shepherd - Daniel Bonnell

GOSPEL: John 10:1-10

I am the gate of the sheepfold

Jesus said:

'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, 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.'





BREAK

REFLECT ON THE SCRIPTURES

This section of the prayer resource is designed to be adapted for people depending on who and how you are gathering to pray. This week you can find a reflection for children as well as a variety of reflections for adults.

1. FOR CHILDREN
2. FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
3. FOR EVERYONE

1. FOR CHILDREN

In today's reading Jesus tells us a parable in which he is the gate which takes us to God. **But can you remember what Jesus says, right at the end of today's gospel?**

Jesus says, "I have come so that you might have life – life in all its fullness."

What do you think it means to have life in all its fullness?

Living life to the full doesn't mean having all the newest toys or the coolest clothes or the biggest house.

And it doesn't even mean just having all the things we need in life although this is a really important part of living life to the full.

It might feel hard at the moment to feel like you can live life to the full when we aren't able to go to school, play sports or hang out with our friends. But living life to the full also means being the best person that we can be, living our lives well and having the chance to use all our gifts and talents for the good of all.

What gifts and talents do you have? What are you good at?

Do you always make the most of the gifts that you have? Do you always try to be the best person you can be?

Even while we are at Level 3, waiting to see when we can go back to school or see our friends and other family again, let's do all that we

can this week to live our own lives to the full – doing all that we can to be the best people we can be and using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

And let's also do all that we can to help others to live their lives to the full too – people here who we see every day and our brothers and sisters around the world.

What will you do this week to live life to the full and to help others to do the same?

Adapted from CAFOD UK's Children's Liturgy Reflection





BREAK

GOOD SHEPHERD AND VOCATIONS SUNDAY

It is Good Shepherd Sunday, the following reflections give you some things to think and talk about in relation to the Gospel and themes for this day.

SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

The image of the shepherd in Jesus' time would have immediately been understood by the people Jesus was talking to. Now though, in some parts of the world people would have very little to do with sheep, let alone shepherds. The shepherd of the Middle East is also very different from the shepherd of New Zealand, even just in terms of numbers in a flock. If one sheep goes missing, it could easily not be noticed.

The shepherd of the biblical Middle East had a much more intimate relationship with a much smaller flock. He would have known each sheep individually and would notice immediately if even one was missing, so Jesus' parable would have made sense.

In addition to this, in New Zealand, the shepherd usually walks (or rides) behind the sheep, often with a dog or two to help. These days they might even use a drone instead! In the Middle East at the time, the shepherd would have walked in front of his sheep and they follow him – and only him, as “they know his voice.”

How does our understanding of the Gospel change when we consider the reality of a shepherd in Jesus' time compared to today?

I AM THE GATE

Jesus identifies himself as a Shepherd but also a ‘gate’. In the Middle East, shepherds would gather their sheep together at night sometimes creating a shelter or collection of wooden sticks to build a fence. Sometimes they may have built a square with a narrow gap for the sheep to enter in and out. One shepherd would take the role of ‘gate’, lying down in the ‘gap’ as an expression of caring for the sheep and not letting them out, and protecting the sheep from danger coming in.

What does this image say to you about Jesus?

Can you identify someone in your own life that has done something like this for you?

LIFE TO THE FULL

This Gospel passage ends with one of Jesus' most beautiful statements: “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” To follow Jesus is not, as some seem to fear, to live a half-life, a life filled with endlessly dire warnings of “Don't!”. It is to live life, our human life, to the greatest possible fullness.

VOCATION

Reflecting on the Gospel is intimately linked with the second theme of this Sunday. Not only is it Good Shepherd Sunday, it is also "Vocations Sunday". On this day we are especially asked first of all to pray that the Church may be provided with the leaders needed to do its work of spreading the Gospel.

Traditionally we are asked to “pray” for vocations. There is a danger that we often end up praying for other people's vocations and not our own. To say this prayer with sincerity involves my reflecting on how God is asking me to make a meaningful contribution of myself (not just money) to the building up of our community, our parish.

We know that at the present time there is a critical shortage of leaders, particularly in the traditional sense – priests and religious. But, while we may earnestly pray that our Church be supplied with the leaders it needs, there can be a tendency among us to pray that OTHERS may answer that call. We do not see ourselves as included. Vocations Sunday challenges each one of us to reflect on how we personally are responding to the call that Jesus is making to each of us right now.

We have for too long given a much too narrow meaning to the word ‘vocation’. We tend to limit it to a calling to be a priest or a member of a religious institute. But, in fact, every single one of us has a vocation. For most of us, probably, it is what we are now doing be it as spouses, parents, teachers, nurses, in customer service or civil servants or running a business ... whatever it is.

Nevertheless, each one of us should be asking ourselves today:

Is what I am spending my energies on every day my real vocation?

How is what I am doing giving witness to my Christian faith?

What contribution am I offering to making this world a better place for people to live in?

God is calling every single one of us to work for the Gospel. For a small number it may be as a priest or religious – and that call can come at any time in one's life. But there are hundreds of other ways of serving the Church and helping to build up the Christian community.

Where is God calling me to make my own unique contribution based on the particular talents God has given me?

If every single one of us were to answer these questions sincerely and to act upon it our Church would have all the leadership it needs.





SEND

SENT TO LIVE WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, Good Shepherd, you tend your flock unceasingly and know our every need. May your crook and your staff always protect us and guide us through the troubles of this life. Amen.

SING/LISTEN THE FOLLOWING HYMN

All the People Said Amen – Matt Maher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9ifzzMD7zk>

WAYS TO LIVE THIS PRAYER THROUGH THE WEEK

- ✓ Find some time to set aside to go back to the questions posed in today's reflection. In prayer, let yourself really ponder where you are being called.
- ✓ As a result of your reflections, consider what changes you might be able to make to how you live and serve others, even if they seem small.
- ✓ Seek out little ways to celebrate the life you have been given, a life intended to be lived to the full. This might be especially hard currently given what is going on around us or in our own lives, but we are reminded of the hope that Jesus offers us in this Easter season.



UNITED

This resource has been developed during the Covid-19 pandemic to assist families, households and individuals to pray together. Our church buildings may be closed, but the Church is still open. In our current circumstance, the domestic Church becomes our primary way of being able to recognise Christ in our midst.

To stay up to date with resources, make sure you sign up to our weekly e-newsletter at <http://pndiocese.org.nz/newsletter> and visit <https://pndiocese.org.nz/covid19-united/>