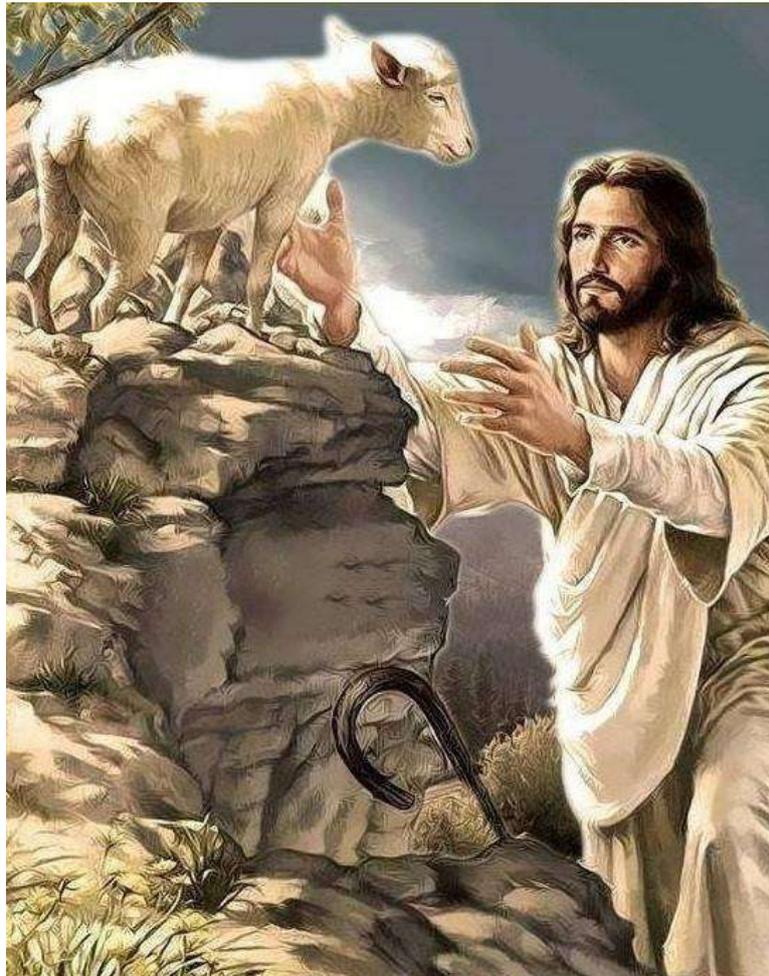


Fourth Sunday of Easter

3rd May 2020



This Sunday is normally known as Good Shepherd Sunday because of the readings we are presented with on this day. The Gospel from John this year has the beautiful image of the shepherd who cares for his sheep and knows each and every one of his own.

'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.' (Jn 10:2-4)

The sheep follow because they recognise the familiar voice of their master. They trust him because they have experienced his protection in the past, they feel secure with him because he knows his own, individually and personally.

I think The Good Shepherd image that Jesus presents us with today is very apt, especially in our present situation. All the technology and science, all the best human endeavours, all the greatest mind empowering and healing skills will never ever reach the same par as truly knowing the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ himself. To know the Lord, to love the Lord, to serve the Lord is that which allows us to face any challenge in this life. It does not mean it will be easy, but the voice of the Shepherd that calls us is far more powerful and efficacious than anything else.

Let us, as always, set some time aside for The Good Shepherd this Sunday and listen to his voice. Listen in the silence of our homes to the voice of God that wants to reassure us, that wants to love us. Listen to the voice of God that wants to challenge us about our lives, our relationships, our strengths and weaknesses. Listen to the voice of God about the future, our future, our families future our worlds future.

Prayer to the Good Shepherd

Good Shepherd of the flock, you tend and feed and protect your chosen people and only ask us to put our trust in your loving care. As host you entertain us at your welcome table and anoint us with your Holy Spirit. Make us ever thankful for all your blessings, O Saviour of the world, living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen

Finance and Donations

Good News! The diocese has set up a system to make it easier for people to donate to their parish by standing order or by a one off payment. It is quick, safe and private. If you go to the diocesan web page www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk at the top right hand corner you will see a red box that says 'DONATE'. By clicking on that you can donate money to St. Mary's Oswaldtwistle, through the main diocesan system and your donation will come straight to the parish.

Spiritual Reading and Nourishment

Many people are finding that they have some spare time each week. There is only so much housework, gardening and D.I.Y you can do. I thought I'd recommend some good books for spiritual reading during the lockdown if people have a little more time.

Catholic Novels

- *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred & Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* by Evelyn Waugh.
- *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse* by Michael D. O'Brien
- *Silence* by Shusaku Endo
- *Strangers and Sojourners: A Novel* by Michael D. O'Brien
- *The Complete Stories* by Flannery O'Connor
- *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene
- *The Robe* by Lloyd C. Douglas
- *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S Lewis
- *The Spear* by Louis de Wohl

Scripture

- *God With Us: Encountering Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* by Edward Sri
- *Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told* by Brant Pitre
- *Journeying with Jonah: The struggle to find yourself* by Denis McBride
- *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* by Scott Hahn

Catholic Faith

- *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father* by Donald Calloway
- *Into His Likeness: Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ* by Edward Sri
- *Catholic and Christian: An Explanation of Commonly Misunderstood Catholic Beliefs* by Alan Schreck
- *Praying The Rosary Like Never Before: Encounter the Wonder of Heaven and Earth* by Edward Sri

Lives of Saints

- *Bernadette of Lourdes* by René Laurentin
- *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father* by D. Calloway
- *Charles De Foucauld (Charles of Jesus) by Jean-Jaques Antier*
- *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words: Sister Lucia's Memoirs* edited by Fr. Lois Kondor, SVD
- *John Henry Newman. His Inner Life* by Dr. Zeno, Capuchin
- *Saint Mary Magdalene: Prophetess of Eucharistic Love* by Sean Davidson
- *The Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle. Saint Manuel González Garcia* by Victoria Schneider
- *The Story of a Soul. The Autobiography of The Little Flower* by St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Monastic Spirituality

- *The Cistercian Way* by André Louf
- *Befriending Silence: Discovering the Gifts of Cistercian Spirituality* by Carl McColman
- *Report from Calabria: A Season with the Carthusian Monks* by a priest
- *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* by Michael Casey

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien