



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

21st April 2024

Fourth Sunday Of Easter



Fr David says...

Some people can be highly trusting of others, which is often a matter of personality. However for others, particularly those who have been victimised or betrayed in the past, building trust can be a slow, laborious process; for some, it may feel downright impossible. Many people who are consistently distrusting have good reason for being so. Trust or the belief that someone or something can be relied on to do what they say they will is a key element of social relationships and a foundation for cooperation. It is critical in romantic relationships, friendships, interactions between strangers, and social and religious groups. A lack of trust in such scenarios can come with serious consequences. Indeed, society as a whole would likely fail to function in the absence of trust. As a person, I am usually an observant of character and in the main, I do get the essence of the person as I observe and listen. I tend to get to know the people I would entrust their special gifts for the different roles I feel they are good at. Once I trust someone with a role, I tend to allow them to fly and flourish. However as everyone else, I have trusted the wrong people for the wrong role. When this happens it not only disappoints me but it lets down the whole community.

Today's gospel and theme is The Good Shepherd. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christian leadership. Jesus's words suggest to us that those who will lead the Christian community will be known by their faithfulness to Jesus. It puts a responsibility on me to build a creative interior life. A life of prayer – a life of intimate relationship with God through Jesus. The leaders will recognise 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's allegory also suggests that faithful Christian Leadership requires a good relationship with the community. The Shepherd knows his sheep and they know him. Christian leadership follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by being faithful to him and by being a good Shepherd.

The relationship between the sheep and their shepherd is based on familiarity. Sheep recognise 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 on their shepherd.

Jesus likens himself to a Shepherd. This is a metaphor ripe with meaning, especially considering God's history with Israel. It is not the first time this image has been invoked. So why does Jesus go further in saying that he is The Good Shepherd, instead of just saying he is a shepherd? Why are we given the adjective of Good? Firstly this sets up a distinction that must be

considered when identifying the true Shepherd of Israel, from other competing or counterfeit shepherds. The adjective good which also can mean right, proper, honourable and beautiful, alerts us to the fact that there can be bad or wrong, improper, dishonourable and downright ugly shepherds that parade around as angels of the light. We must discern the difference. And Jesus goes further to help us discern that difference with the actions that will accompany a good shepherd. And that action is described as one who lays down his life for the sheep.

Second by including the adjective good, Jesus is building our trust in him and in the Father who sent him we do not want to put our trust in any other Shepherd. We need to know that he is trustworthy, that he is indeed good. And we don't want to follow a shepherd who is good in name only. Jesus uses the contrast twice that designates a true shepherd from a fake by comparing a hired hand to a shepherd that the sheep actually belong to. That comparison brings to mind that hired hands are only in it for their livelihood. As soon their livelihood is in jeopardy, not to mention their own lives, they can be counted on to head for the hills. The contrast zeros in on the fact that a good shepherd cares more for the sheep than he does for himself. He is willing to lay down his life for the good of the sheep. We can also see a contrast between a shepherd and a hired hand who sees his relationship with the sheep as a contract that can be made null and void once the conditions change.

We must not end there. Jesus also mentions in this closing verse that he not only lays his life down, but that he also may take it up again. And with that statement we are reminded of what we are celebrating during this season of Easter. Our good Shepherd is a risen Shepherd. He is still shepherding us, even in this text to know him and his Father has for him so we too can come to rest in the assurance of knowing what love is. The Good shepherd is still warning us and guarding us against the hired hands who do not have our best interest in mind but would sell us out to the wolf at the first sight of cost for themselves.

As we continue in our celebration of the Risen Lord, may we grow to know him more and more, learning to trust him as our Good Shepherd who leads us to know the God in the same way as he does.

Today is also Vocations Sunday – May we hear the call of Jesus to follow him wherever He wishes to call us for the good of the vineyard. May we have the courage to respond positively.

Thank you for taking your time once again to read my reflection for this week. God bless you all.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Fourth Sunday of Easter Saturday 20th April Sunday 21st April	6:00pm Anthony Olivelle RIP (Foundation Mass) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Christina Martyn RIP (Sheila)
Feria Monday 22nd April	10:00am Barbara Camilleri
Saint George Tuesday 23rd April	10:00am Nanette Gowers RIP
Feria Wednesday 24th April	10:00am Austin Barradell RIP 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Mark Thursday 25th April	10:00am Fr Barry Hughes
Feria Friday 26th April	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fifth Sunday Of Easter Saturday 27th April Sunday 28th April	06:00pm Mary Agnes Lokko Nathan RIP (V Nathan Rogers) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Eileen Carey RIP (L O'Sullivan)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for The Priests Training Fund
 Next weeks second collection is for Maintenance of St George's Cathedral



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Fruit
- Tinned cold meats
- UHT Milk
- Cooking Sauces
- Jam
- Multi-surface wipes & sprays

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>