

PARISH OF INISHMAGRATH

Fourth Sunday of Easter

3rd May 2020

Fr Tom McManus – 964 8025

Neighbouring Priests: Fr T Mannion 964 3014 - Fr P Casey 916 4143 -

Fr Loughlain Carolan 985 3012

Tune in to Church services at - www.churchservices.tv or <https://www.mcnmedia.tv> and search for your local or favourite church for Mass.

Dear Parishioners,
I hope you and your loved ones are well. We pray for those who are ill and for those who grieve the loss of a loved one and for those who have died. The family home was the first Christian Church. So even if our Parish Churches are closed to large gatherings, your own home is the domestic Church. It is a wonderful place and opportunity to pray as a family. Pray before and after meals, pray together before bed time. Maybe pray a decade of the Rosary together every night. There two or more are gathered in Jesus name, He is there with you. Pope Francis encourages us to pray the Rosary in this month of May.
Fr. Tom.

Mass Leaflets: And newsletters will be left in each Church each Saturday morning.

Accord: If you need to speak to an experienced Couples and Relationship Counsellor, please contact 01 531 331 open 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

Meidheal Wanted: Volunteers who could mow the grass in our local graveyards until the RSS workers are back on duty?

Parish Finances: Use your envelopes, return them when Masses resume or you can request a standing order form to pay Dues and offertory directly to our bank account, quote your envelope number as the payment reference.
Thanks.

Day of Prayer for Vocations

First Reading:

Acts 2:14, 36-41

The first sermon of Peter ends with stunning effect. Three thousand convert Jews were added to the Messianic community. Luke prepared for this when he noted that the crowds gathered at Calvary returned to their homes beating their breasts (Luke 23-48). As they gathered around Peter and the other apostles, their willingness to change is clear. "What must we do brothers?" When Peter mentions the promise, it is clearly the one give to Abraham and his children (Gen 17-5). This is now realised when a large number of Jews are baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Second Reading:

1 Peter 2:20-25

In the difficulties of life, the example, presence and comfort of Christ are invoked. He did not render evil for evil. He was silent before his captors. In all of it, He entrusted Himself to God who judges justly. In the final verse the author turns to Christ the "shepherd" and "guardian". Later on in the letter he will refer to the leaders of the community as shepherds and Jesus as the chief shepherd (1Peter 5:2-4).

Gospel Reading:

John 10:1-10

This chapter in John contains a melody of images associated with sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd; Jesus is the gate. Jesus is the one that enters through the gate of the sheepfold. The true leaders are the ones who enter through the gate who is Jesus. The believers are the flock who recognise and follow Christ the Good Shepherd; they enter and leave the fold through Jesus who is the safe gate (1-6). The true shepherds of the flock are those who come to it through Jesus.

Reflections:

The Gospel text throws interesting light on ministry in the Christian community. The image in these verses is that of a communal fold and in it the individual sheep know the voice of their individual shepherd. There is a personal bond between the sheep and the shepherd. The individual care is similar to that found in the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7). Also, those who are of God listen to his voice (John 20:16). The true shepherd comes to the flock through Christ, the gate.

Further on in the Gospel is another application of the figure of the gate. This time it relates to the sheep and not just the shepherd. Just as the good sheep enter and leave the fold only through the gate, so entry is gained to God's fold, God's pasturage, only through Christ. This theme is obviously associated with

that of "I am the Way, no-one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

The relationship is one of ease and freedom. There are no constraints. They are relaxed in being with one another, "they go freely in and out". Shepherding and ministry feature in the last chapter of the Gospel where the Evangelist jogs our Memories and invites us to remember that dreadful scene in the courtyard of Anna. By his three affirmations of love, Peter is rehabilitated after his three denials. The shepherd is one who loves Christ and aware of his own fallibility.

The Deep End - Like a Shepherd.

My grandfather was a farmer in Malin Head in Co. Donegal. As a child I loved to watch him round up the sheep in the evenings, using a variety of whistling techniques to guide his sheepdog, Jack, to steer the flock safely into the pen for the night. It was always a smooth transition, at a quiet time of the evening, with dog and flock well versed in the ins and outs of the process. It is this experience that I recall when I hear this parable. And it was the local shepherding practices of the time that Jesus turned to in an attempt to explain who He is.

The shepherd in Jesus' parable calls his sheep one by one to lead them into the safety of the sheepfold, as was the practice in Palestine at the time, and the sheep follow their shepherd because they know his voice. Since the Pharisees, to whom Jesus is speaking, don't get it, he explains the parable; He is the gate of the sheepfold, and anyone who enters through Him will be safe and will be sure of finding pasture.

Sheep and shepherd imagery is common in both Old and New Testament, and today's psalm is probably the most recognisable passage. "The Lord is my shepherd.... Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me to revive my drooping spirit".

A common practice and a popular image provided the perfect springboard for an examination of who Jesus is and what he offers to those who follow him: safety, pasture and life.

Triona Doherty

Spiritual Communion Prayer:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my Soul.
Since I cannot, at this moment, receive you sacramentally, please come
spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you now as if you were already there and I unite myself
wholly to you.

Never permit me to be separated from you.

Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland:

You gave hope to your people in a time of distress and comforted them
in sorrow. You have inspired countless pilgrims to pray with confidence
to your Divine Son, remembering His promise, "Ask and you shall
receive, seek and you shall find". Help me to remember that we are all
pilgrims on the road to heaven. Fill me with love and concern for my
brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who live with me.
Comfort me when I am sick, lonely or depressed. Teach me how to
take part ever more reverently in the Holy Mass. Pray for me now, and
at the hour of my death.
Amen.