



St Michael's Parish Nowra

Incorporates the Church communities of St Michael's - Nowra, St Patrick's - Berry, Sacred Heart - Bomaderry

Mary Help of Christians – Culburra, Holy Spirit - Vincentia & St Joseph's – Kangaroo Valley

Telephone: 4423 1712 Email: office@nowraparish.org.au Web: www.nowraparish.org.au

4th Sunday of Easter

3rd May 2020

Good Shepherd Sunday



THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

in the words of
Blessed John Henry Newman.

The old and familiar 'saying' **"that absence makes the heart grow fonder"** could well capture what many faithful parishioners are expressing in regard to not being able to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist in the Covid-19 virus environment. This brings to mind some eloquent words from Blessed John Henry Newman:

One aspect of Catholicism that moved and astonished him was the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. He was simply taken aback by how much the Real Presence affected him once he understood it. He wrote about his surprise to a friend (who later converted to Catholicism):

"I did not know, or did not observe, the tabernacle Lamp – but now after tasting of the awful delight of worshipping God in His Temple, how unspeakably cold is the idea of a Temple without that Divine Presence!

I am writing next room to the Chapel. – It is such an incomprehensible blessing to have Christ in bodily presence in one's house, within one's walls, as swallows up all other privileges ... To know that He is close by – to be able again and again through the day to go to visit Him ... "It is really most wonderful to see this Divine Presence looking out almost into the open streets from the various Churches ... I never knew what worship was, as an objective fact, till I entered the Catholic Church."

He is not past; He is present now. And though He is not seen, He is here. The same God who walked the water, who did miracles, etc., is in the Tabernacle. We come before Him; we speak to Him just as He was spoken to ... years ago." (Newman's words from a sermon 1858)

The priests of the parish continue to celebrate Mass for parishioners, anniversaries, the sick, and special needs.



Each Sunday at 9am, the Diocese broadcasts Sunday Mass with Bishop Brian. You can view it on the Diocesan website www.dow.org.au or [YouTube Channel](#) or [Facebook page](#).

Good Shepherd Sunday – Vocation Sunday.

"The Christian mission is now! Each one of us is called to become a witness of the Lord, here and now... We should not wait to be perfect to respond with our generous "yes", nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord." (Pope Francis)

Fr Duane Fernandez, as vocations director, has provided a video message which is available on the Diocesan YouTube Channel, Facebook page or dow.sh/VocationsMessage2020

Anthony Crook was ordained Deacon before Christmas and will be ordained to the priesthood in the near future. The Diocese has 2 seminarians at the Good Shepherd Seminary. Also 4 young men from Vietnam, who are spending 3 months in Parishes of Wollongong. They are receiving intensive English tuition & experiencing Parish life as they (and the Diocese) discern together whether they will return for 12 months next year, and possibly proceed to subsequent seminary formation for our Diocese. Let us hold them all in prayer this weekend and continue to pray for more priests to serve the people of our Diocese into the future.



We prayerfully remember all who died this past week. We also remember those whose anniversaries occur: **Marie Bhugon, Don Allen, and Val Murdoch.**

Also all who have died from the Covid-19 virus, in Australia and worldwide. May they rest in peace.

From the Letter of Pope Francis for the Month of May.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family.



The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.



A very sacred moment on Anzac Day, when Ron Batchelor tolled the Bell at St Michael's, as did Jim DaSilva at Berry at the eleventh hour to prayerfully and reflectively commemorate the Fallen. Other Churches in Berry and Nowra did the same at the same hour.

Lest we forget.

PROJECT COMPASSION: We were delighted this week to forward to CARITAS, a cheque for close to \$7,000 from your contributions to Project Compassion. Some parishioners have been very generous indeed.





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First Reading - A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:14. 36-41)

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd with a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

Responsorial Psalm - Ps 22:1-6. R. v.1

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

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. **(R.)**
2. He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort. **(R.)**
3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **(R.)**
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. **(R.)**

Second Reading - A reading from the first letter of St Peter (1 Pt 2:20-25)

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel - A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (Jn 10:1-10)

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.'



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Homily by Fr Ronan Kilgannon – Fourth Sunday of Easter 4th

"The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice".

Sheep are mentioned more frequently in the Bible than any other animal. While we normally dismiss them as dumb, Jesus does not. There is something He admires about them that He wants us to imitate.

In Palestine today, if we came to an oasis with Bedouin shepherds and their sheep, the scene would be reminiscent of one in the First Century. The various flocks would be mixed together drinking or resting, but that would not be a problem. Each shepherd would know, that when he made his distinctive call, his sheep would come to him straightway. Sheep hear their shepherd's voice and only his when He calls. They follow him and no other, because they know they can trust him.

By using this image of sheep responding to their shepherd's voice, Jesus is suggesting we be similarly attuned to His. And this we must try to do today, among the insistent demands of our mobile phones, Mp3 players, wifi, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the media in general. He wants us to listen to Him over and above all that, and trust what He teaches. He addresses us from the Scriptures, hopefully in some sermons, quietly when we are at prayer, at times through the people we meet or in the events in which we are involved. St Thomas Aquinas wrote, *"Nihil est sine voce"*, *"Nothing is without a voice"* or, the Divine Presence whispers to us in everything. Please God, Amen.

Reflection by Greg Sunter

The fourth Sunday of Easter is sometimes known as Good Shepherd Sunday. In the three different cycles of the liturgical year, the gospel on this Sunday comes from John, chapter 10 – an extended discourse by Jesus on the image of himself as the good shepherd.

This year the reading is the beginning of the chapter and stops just immediately before the words, 'I am the good shepherd'. Our understanding of this whole image and the scene that is set in today's passage is very dependent upon a contextual understanding of the times. Whilst shepherds were generally regarded as being little better than criminals, they often put their lives in danger to tend to their flocks.

Of a night time, several flocks of sheep would be penned in a communal sheepfold, usually made of stone walls. There was only one entrance to the sheepfold and one of the shepherds would effectively become the gate by sleeping across the entranceway. This was to keep the sheep in but also to guard against thieves.

Thieves might climb over the wall into the sheepfold but the sheep were trained to respond to their shepherd's voice alone so thieves could only steal what sheep they could carry off or those that were not sufficiently trained to their shepherd's commands.

When Jesus described himself as the gate of the sheepfold, his audience would have immediately understood the analogy. For a shepherd to become the gate to the sheepfold of a night was to risk his life for not only his own sheep but all the sheep in the fold overnight. It took courage and demonstrated utter commitment.

