

Thought for the week

Fourth Sunday of Easter — 22nd April 2018

Each year in the Liturgical cycle, the Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Easter is always taken from chapter 10 of John, where Jesus first speaks of himself as the '*good shepherd*' – the one who lays down his life for his sheep. Jesus distinguishes between the one who owns the sheep and the person who is simply hired to look after them.

Next we are reminded that the good shepherd knows his sheep and they know him – there is a mutual bond between them. Again the hired hand does not have that same level of relationship with his charges as the owner does.

Thirdly, the good shepherd recognises that not all the sheep are as yet part of his fold, but it is his goal that there will be '*only one flock, and one shepherd*': ultimately the whole world will be united with God in his Kingdom which is what is at the heart of this gospel message.

Today is also Vocations Sunday and a time to pray that the Church will be provided with the leaders needed to do its work of spreading the Gospel. Today is also the time for each of us to ask ourselves whether we are doing our bit in following our own vocation, whatever that might be, as a tool to bear witness to our Christian faith.

We might ask ourselves what am I doing in my daily life to be a spreader of truth, of love, of justice, of freedom, of tolerance, of acceptance We should remember that the shepherd might be us as a parent, sibling, relative or friend; It might be us in the work place – the boardroom, a hospital, a school, shop, office, factory or wherever we happen to be. Whatever our role in life, we should always try to live up to the commitment made in our baptismal promises.

During Mass today let us be nourished by what we hear and receive through God's word: so that as we make our way home, to work or recreation in the coming week, we can imitate the Good Shepherd and follow in the Good Shepherd's footsteps.

A parishioner