

HOMILY FOR THE 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER (Good Shepherd Sunday) 26.4.2026

First Reading - Acts 2:14, 36-41;

Second Reading - 1Peter 2:20b-25;

Gospel - John 10:1-10

Today, on this Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, we come together as one parish family to reflect on a beautiful and comforting image: Jesus as our Good Shepherd. This is also the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, a day when we pray in a special way for those whom God is calling from among us perhaps even from our own families to serve the Church as priests, deacons, and in the consecrated life.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of Himself as both the Shepherd and the Gate. He is the one who knows His sheep by name, who leads them, protects them, and lays down His life for them. This is not just a distant or abstract image; it is something very real for us here in our parish. Each one of us is known personally by Christ. Each one of us matters to Him.

In the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear Saint Peter speaking boldly to the people. He tells them that the Jesus who was crucified is truly Lord and Messiah. His message touches their hearts, and they ask, "What are we to do?" Peter's answer is simple and powerful: repent, be baptised, and begin a new life. That same invitation is extended to us today. No matter where we are in life, the Good Shepherd is always calling us back, always inviting us to begin again.

The Psalm we prayed "The Lord is my shepherd" reminds us that God is actively caring for us. He guides us, feeds us, and walks with us even through difficult times. Many in our parish carry burdens, worries about family, health, work, or the future but today's message assures us that we are never alone. The Shepherd walks with us.

In the Second Reading, Saint Peter again reminds us that Jesus is our model, especially in suffering. When life is difficult, we are invited to trust as He did, knowing that God can bring healing and purpose even out of pain.

So what does all this mean for us here, in our parish community?

First, it means that all of us are called to be shepherds in some way. Parents, you are the first shepherds of your children. The way you speak, the values you live, the faith you practice, these shape their lives deeply. Teachers, caregivers, and all who serve others, you too are shepherds. Our parish depends on people who are willing to guide, support, and care for others with patience and love.

At the same time, we are also called to be good sheep, people who listen for the voice of the Shepherd. We hear His voice in Scripture, in prayer, and in the life of the Church. Here in our parish, that means staying connected: coming to Mass regularly, receiving the Sacraments, and taking part in the life of the community. It also means supporting one another, encouraging one another, and working together to build up our parish as a place of welcome, faith, and hope.

Today, in a special way, we are asked to pray for vocations. Perhaps the Lord is calling someone from this very parish, one of our young people, or even someone considering a new direction in life. Let us not be afraid to encourage that call. A simple word of support, a prayer, or a good example of faithful living can make a real difference.

As a parish, we have a responsibility to create an environment where such calls can be heard and nurtured, through our prayer, our encouragement, and our involvement in parish life.

Let me end with a simple and gentle reminder. Sometimes we might think that the priest is the shepherd and everyone else just follows. But today's Gospel reminds us of something deeper: **Jesus is the true Shepherd**. All of us, priests and people alike, are under His care.

There's a light-hearted story about a priest teaching children about the Good Shepherd. He asked them, "If you are the sheep, then who is the shepherd?" One little girl quickly answered, "Jesus!" The priest, a bit surprised, asked, "Then who am I?" She thought for a moment and said, "I guess you're the sheepdog."

There's a lot of truth in that! Those called to lead in the Church are simply helpers of the Good Shepherd, guiding, supporting, and walking alongside the flock.

So today, let us listen again for the voice of Jesus in our lives. Let us trust Him more deeply. And let us care for one another as members of one flock, under the loving guidance of our one true Shepherd.

Amen.