

St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

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Hogarth Partnership

St Anne, St Augustine, St Mary, St Osmund, Holy Family, St Teresa, St Thomas Aquinas, SS William & Francis De Sale

FoodBank: The Well:

46 East Green, West Auckland. DL14 9HJ. Opening times: Wednesday-Friday 9am - 3pm
Items may be left at the Foodbanks during their opening times or placed in St. Osmund's Church porch.

Please Pray for:

The sick of the Parish: Patrick Doherty, Nico Human, Alexandra Jüngst, Kate Konig, Nino Volpe, Bernadette Wyr, Patrick Heffernan and Susan Hunton

Offertory

If you wish to make your donations directly to St. Osmund's. Bank account details are:
HSBC: D.H & N Gainford St. Osmund's.
Account No. 41164015.
Sort Code 40-34-18.

Peace for the people of Ukraine

We continue to pray earnestly for peace in Ukraine, joining the Holy Father in his consecration of Russia and Ukraine to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart – may her prayers bring a swift end to the conflict, and consolation to the bereaved and to the many thousands of refugees.

The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle has the following job vacancies:

Administrator, St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle – full-time. Closing date: 16 April

IT Field Engineer (two posts)

Diocesan Offices, Newcastle – full-time, 9-month fixed term contract. Closing date: 21 April

Please visit www.diocesehn.org.uk for full details or contact us on 0191 243 3301.



4th Sunday of Easter

Theme: The Good Shepherd

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

St Osmund's will be open for Parish Mass on Sundays at 9.30am and Tuesdays at 10.00am

Children's Liturgy:

The Children's Liturgy will resume this Sunday 21st April

Mass Times

As noted earlier this year, the new schedule of weekend Masses will begin in May. The principle used is that on the even Sundays of each month (second and fourth) there will be Mass at Gainford at 9.30 on Sunday as now; but on the odd Sundays of each month (first and third) there will be a vigil Mass on Saturday evening at 6.30pm. There will always be a notice on the porch door giving details for forthcoming weeks. It will inevitably take a while to get used to the new pattern, so do take particular care of times as it beds in.

4/5 May (first Sunday of the month) – Mass at Gainford,
Saturday 6.30

11/12 May (second Sunday of the month) – Mass at Gainford,
Sunday 9.30

18/19 May (third Sunday of the month) – Mass at Gainford,
Saturday 6.30

25/26 May (fourth Sunday of the month) – Mass at Gainford,
Sunday 9.30

1/2 June (first Sunday of the month) – Mass at Gainford,
Saturday 6.30 &c.

First reading Acts 4:8-12

The name of Jesus Christ is the only name in which we can be saved

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

Responsorial Psalm 117(118): 1,8-9,21-23,26,28-29

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in men;
it is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

I will thank you for you have answered
and you are my saviour.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes.

Blessed in the name of the Lord
is he who comes.

We bless you from the house of the Lord;
You are my God, I thank you.

My God, I praise you.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.

Second reading 1 John 3:1-2

We shall be like God because we shall see him as he really is

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children; and that is what
we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been
revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall
be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

Gospel Acclamation Jn10:14

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the good shepherd, says the
Lord; I know my own sheep and my own know me.
Alleluia!

Gospel John 10:11-18

The good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd
is one who lays down his life for his sheep.

The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the
sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and
runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the
wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is
only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

'I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own
know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the
Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.

And there are other sheep I have that are not of this
fold, and these I have to lead as well.

They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only
one flock, and one shepherd.

'The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in
order to take it up again.

No one takes it from me;

I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my
power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up
again; and this is the command I have been given by my
Father.'

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Feast Days this Week

Tuesday 23rd April: St George

Wednesday 24th April: St Fidelis of Sigmaringen

Thursday 25th April: St Mark

The Cycle of Prayer

Vocations: Especially on World Day of Prayer for
Vocations — 4th Sunday of Easter

Background

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is held each year
on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. In the Gospel of John
read on this Sunday, in each of the three years, Jesus
speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd. The Good
Shepherd who has come so that people may have life to
the full, the one who lays down his life for his sheep, the
one who knows his sheep — they recognise his voice.
There may be a collection.

Prayer

Father,

*in your plan for our salvation
you provide shepherds for your people.*

*Fill your Church with the spirit
of courage and love.*

*Raise up worthy ministers
of your altars*

*and ardent but gentle servants
of the gospel. Roman Missal*

Reflection on the Readings**4th Sunday of Easter****21st April**

In the Catholic tradition, a Homily, interprets the readings, shining a light on the present and asking each one of us what we must change in our lives, from today. The challenge is not so much about recounting the history or retelling the story, but living the gospel.

A very personal relationship

When people go to Rome on pilgrimage, they usually try to include a visit to the Catacombs, the earliest Christian cemeteries in existence. The earliest Christian art is there in the catacombs, in images are very simple and unadorned compared to the art that would emerge in later centuries. Yet these pictures are very striking just because of their simplicity and directness. One of the images of Jesus most found in the catacombs is that of the Good Shepherd. One is in the Catacomb of San Callistus, showing a young beardless man with a sheep draped around his shoulders and holding a bucket of water in his right hand. Clearly the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd that we find in today's gospel spoke to Christians from the earliest days of the church.

The shepherd image in the catacombs appealed to Christians from the start, because it conveys the personal nature of the relationship between Jesus and his followers; it portrays the close personal care that the shepherd has for the sheep. The shepherd has gone looking for the one sheep that was wandered off and having found it, he takes it home to the flock upon his shoulders. There is a bond between the shepherd and this one sheep. That is what Jesus conveys in today's gospel. He declares that he knows his own and his own know him, just as the Father knows him and he knows the Father. It is an extraordinary statement to make. Jesus is saying that the very personal relationship he has with his heavenly Father is the model for the equally personal relationship he has with each one of us. Jesus knows us as intimately as the Father knows him, and he wants us to know him as intimately as he knows the Father. There is a great deal to ponder there. When it comes to the Lord we are not just one of a crowd, lost in a sea of faces. In a way that we will never fully understand, the Lord knows each one of us by name. He relates to us in a personal way and he invites us to relate to him in a personal way. He wishes to enter into a personal relationship with each one of us. I am often struck by a line in Saint Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, where he says, 'I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me'. We can each make our own those words of Saint Paul. When Jesus says in today's gospel that, as the good shepherd, 'I lay down my life for my sheep', he is saying that he lays down his life for each one of us individually.

The Lord who knows us by name, who gave himself in love for each one of us, also calls us by name. Today is Vocations Sunday. The Lord has a calling that is personal to each one of us. He calls us in our uniqueness with our very particular temperament, our unique identity, the background that is specific to each one of us. No one of us is like anyone else. Parents know how distinct and unique each of their children is. They will all have been given the same love; they grow up in basically the same environment. Yet, from a very early age, their uniqueness becomes very evident. The family is a microcosm of the church as a whole. From the time of our baptism, we are each called to be the Lord's disciples, to follow the good Shepherd. However, the way we do that will be unique to each one of us. The particular way in which the Lord works through us is unique to each one of us. I can do something for the Lord that only I can do. Each person in this church can do something for the Lord that only he or she can do. Each one of us has a unique contribution to make to the work of the Lord in the world, to the life of the church, and that contribution is just as vital as anyone else's contribution. We each have a unique vocation and each vocation is equally significant. Each one of us is vitally important to the Lord. When we each respond to our unique vocation, we give a lift to everyone else. When any one of us fails to respond to that vocation, we are all a little bit impoverished.

The first reading talks about the stone that was rejected by the builders becoming the keystone of the building. There is a clear reference there to Jesus himself, the rejected one. We can all feel at times like the rejected stone, for whatever reason. Yet, we are never rejected in the Lord's eyes. He continues to call us in the way that is unique to us. He sees us as the keystone for some aspect of his work. He recognises the potential for good that is within us all. On this Vocations Sunday we commit ourselves anew to hearing and responding to the call of the good shepherd.

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It's pretty obvious where today gets its name from – in our Gospel Christ utters the famous words 'I am the Good Shepherd', and goes on to say something about what that means. Everything else which we might say about shepherding in the Church has to come from this text and take us back to it.

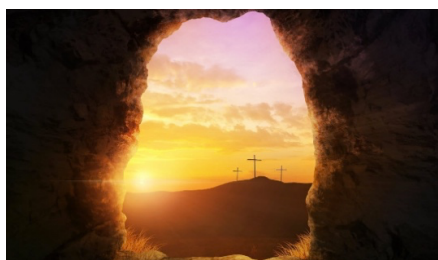
The first point is to note that we are the flock of Christ. He is our true shepherd, he is the one which we are supposed to be following. This of course has two parts to it – first he leads us, and secondly, we follow him. If our hearts and minds are not focused on Christ, then we can never be his flock, he can never be our shepherd. It certainly isn't always easy to be part of a flock, to accept the lead and the governance which he gives to us. But he isn't merely 'a shepherd', nor even merely 'the shepherd' – he is 'the good shepherd'. We can place our trust in his shepherding because he is always perfectly seeking our good. His lead will always take us to where we should be – to the place which is best for us. He is never going to lead us to the wrong place – though if we're not careful we can go to the wrong place by missing what he says to us.

But Good Shepherd Sunday also stretches beyond Christ to include those much much lower down who also seek to help to guide the flock of Christ. When Christ instituted his Church, it was so that we could journey together with him and towards him. But this means that we need to have lower level shepherds – the clergy – who are called from among God's people to help God to draw and guide them closer to himself. Good Shepherd Sunday rightly acts as a challenge to all of us who have been called to this work of service; it rightly reminds us of what we are supposed to be doing.

If Christ, the Good Shepherd, is the one who lays down his life for the flock; then the same should be true of his earthly assistants. If Christ, the Good Shepherd, knows his flock and is known by them; then the same should be true of his earthly assistants. Of course, there has never been a single Bishop or Priest who has managed to do this completely; but every time we do manage to do things well it is because of Christ. As we are called to act in His name, so too we must seek to work in his strength, and under his rule and guidance. Among the first words which Pope Francis spoke to the world after his election were 'please pray for me' – these words could be repeated by every single Bishop and Priest. If we are to serve the people of God, then we need to be faithful in our own prayers – but even more importantly, we need the support of the prayers of those whom we seek to serve.

The Church also asks us all to pray today for vocations. There is no way to sugar-coat the situation in this country, for several years now more Priests have been retiring and dying than have been ordained. Our Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle had over 200 Priests at the turn of the millennium, it now has fewer than 150 (an increasing proportion of whom are retired) a drop of over a quarter. This presents a significant challenge, one which Bishop Stephen has mentioned in his pastoral letters, and has been a significant part of the listening exercise which he has been running. Without Priests there is no Mass, there is no way to get around this basic point. Offering sincere prayers for vocations is a vital part of ensuring the future of our parishes. But also acting practically can help too – if you know a young man suggesting the Priesthood to him can be a powerful step in encouraging another shepherd to step forward. Christ the Good Shepherd never abandons his flock, but we are called to work with him, through our prayers and through our actions. May we also recognise his guidance, and follow it with all of our hearts. **Fr. Thomas.**

Public Lecture - The renowned historian and former President of Magdalene College, Cambridge, Professor Eamon Duffy FSA FBA KSG will visit The Church of the Holy Name, North Jesmond Avenue, Newcastle NE2 3JX on Saturday 4 May at 11.30am to give his lecture *Celebrity Priest: Robert Hugh Monsignor Benson and the End of the World*. Professor Duffy will discuss Fr Benson's life and work, and that of his father who was Archbishop of Canterbury. One of Fr Benson's brothers wrote "Land of Hope and Glory", while the other wrote the Mapp and Lucia novels. All are welcome for this non-ticketed event.



Tea & Coffee after Mass

Tea and coffee are available after Mass in the parish centre – all are most welcome to join this moment of fellowship as a parish.



Best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy week ahead