

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter



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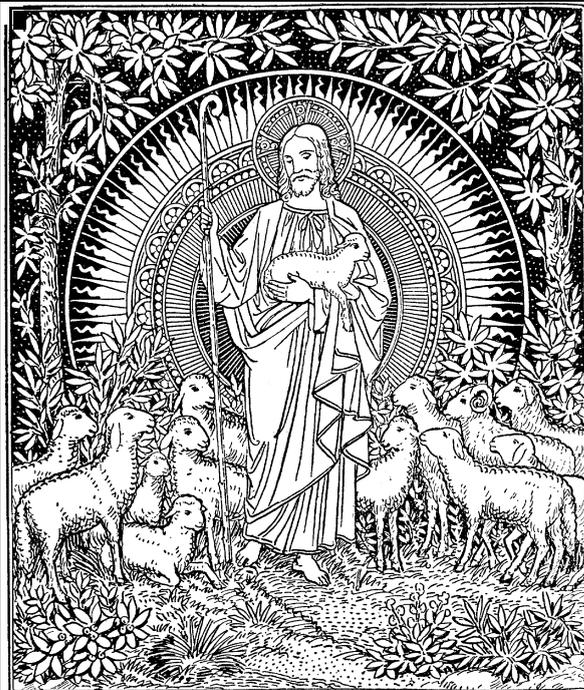
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This newsletter is available in large-print format. Ask at the Sacristy.

May 3rd 2009: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Good Shepherd Sunday)



WHAT MAKES A SHEPHERD “GOOD”?

In the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Eastertide each year we hear a passage from the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel in which Our Lord speaks to us about Himself as the Good Shepherd.

In using this imagery, Our Lord helps us to think about the relationship between a shepherd and this sheep. The owner of a flock of sheep in Our Lord's day might well hire in a man to look after the sheep in return for pay. Such a man would be called a “hireling”, and would not be likely to establish a special rapport with the sheep he looked after. Yet, even if he did so, he would not necessarily be prepared to face major danger to himself on account of the sheep, should some danger threaten them. Our Lord tells us to think about it in this way—can you imagine a shepherd prepared to face danger to himself simply to save one or two sheep from a marauding enemy like a wolf? Surely not! A shepherd might be prepared to look after *all* the sheep up to a point, but not to the point of allowing some dreadful fate to befall himself on account of even a few of them.

Yet this is exactly what Our Lord invites us to think about Him! He says that He is prepared not simply to face danger on our behalf **but to lay down His life for us!** He is fully prepared to die in order to save us, His flock of sheep, from death. The wolf from whom He protects us is the Devil. The death He Himself accepts is in our place. By being killed in our stead He protects us from the danger of death. A hireling would not do that for us. He would, quite understandably, run away to save his own skin. Our Lord will not do that **because He has concern for His sheep.**

OUR MASTER'S VOICE

Our Lord also takes another image from shepherding as it was practiced in His day. Quite often, sheep belonging to different owners would be mixed together in one place. Our Lord reminds His hearers of the way in which different shepherds could then go to the great mass of sheep and call out their own from the mass. Sheep are by no means stupid. Even if there are many shepherds all calling out at once, they can recognise the voice of their own shepherd and they can follow it.

Our Lord wants us to think about this carefully. Even though He is the *only* Creator of all the sheep, that is, of all the people in the world, there are many sheep, many human beings, who do not recognise Him. He is the Creator and Lord of all, yet not all acknowledge Him. It is a special gift indeed that enables us to recognise the voice of Our Lord. Moreover, we have to learn how to listen out for His voice in the midst of many conflicting voices clamouring for our attention. This is an image especially easy for us to understand in the modern world. How many messages do we hear in the media? Among our friends and colleagues? From Government and from popular Personalities? How many of these messages and voices are quite contrary to the Gospel? You may well hear things on the television or radio, or read in newspapers or magazines, that are not in accordance with what Christ teaches us in the Gospel, or which attempt to undermine our faith in Christ and in His voice. We have to learn not to be misled by them, however reasonable they seem to sound at first.

So how do we recognise Our Lord's voice anyway? It is not as though we can hear Him *directly*. He now speaks to us through specially chosen and appointed persons who speak to us on His behalf and with His authority. These are the shepherds of His Church, the Bishops. They are the ones who have been given authority to speak in His name and with His voice. The bishops who are in union with the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, are the living voice of Our Lord in the world today. When they interpret His teaching, and explain His word to us, they do so to guide us into all truth. Let us pray for all our shepherds, priests as well as bishops, that they may be faithful even to laying down their lives for Christ's flock, the Holy Church.

Sunday May 3rd: The Fourth Sunday of Easter (White)

- 8.30 a.m. *Low Mass*
- 9.30 a.m. *Latin Low Mass—1962 Missal*
- 10.30 a.m. *Solemn High Mass*
- 12.00 p.m. *(Families with young children)*
- 5.30 p.m. *Sung Congregational Mass*
- 7.30 p.m. *Vespers and Benediction*

FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 4

Monday: Bank Holiday: Masses at 8 and 11 a.m. only. No evening Mass or devotions.

Tuesday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

May Devotions at 7.45 p.m. (including the Rosary)

Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass.

Monday, 4th May: The English Martyrs. Memoria. (Red) Bank Holiday

- **Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.**
- **No evening Mass or Devotions**

The English Martyrs More than 600 hundred people gave their lives for the Catholic Faith during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, starting with Henry VIII's persecution of the Church following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. However, most were martyred during the reign of Elizabeth I, his daughter by Anne Boleyn. In 1571 an Act of Parliament made it treasonable to question Elizabeth's title as head of the Church in England, therefore making the practice of Roman Catholicism, in essence, treasonable. Some were priests, and those who harboured them who were most sought. In the majority of cases terrible tortures were inflicted prior to execution. The martyrs died in defence of the Church as founded by Our Lord on the Rock of St Peter, and for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Tuesday, 5th May: Tuesday of Easter Week 4 (White)

- **May Devotions at 7.45 p.m.**

Wednesday, 6th May: Wednesday of Easter Week 4. (White)

- **May Devotions at 7.45 p.m.**

Thursday, 7th May: Thursday of Easter Week 4. (White)

- **May Devotions at 7.45 p.m.**

Friday, 8th May: Friday of Easter Week 4. (White).

- **May Devotions at 7.45 p.m.**

Saturday, May 9th: Saturday of Easter Week 4. (White)

- **Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.**
- **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8.30 to 10.45 a.m.**
- **Benediction at 10.45 a.m.**
- **Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon & from 5.30 p.m.**
- **First Mass of Sunday (Fifth Sunday of Easter) at 5.45 p.m.**

10th May: Fifth Sunday of Easter (White)

Mass & Service Times:

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **9.30 a.m. Latin Low Mass 1962 Missal**
- **10.30 a.m. Latin High Mass**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick Sr Francis Clare, David Dearn, John Shaw, May Poppins, John Rose, Bobby Cunningham, Katie Hayward, Mary Cunliffe, Carole Halls, Margaret Casey, John McCann, Patrick Walshe, Raymond Colquhoun and Elizabeth Friday.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Donald Hanley, Noel Finnegan and Giuseppe Cosimetti; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** George Butcher, Frederick Obasi, Mary Berry and John Forsyth.

Giuseppe Cosimetti's funeral is on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Reception of remains: Tuesday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, May 9th/10th, The Fourth Sunday of Easter:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Brigid Hogan
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dulcie Robinson
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

Third Sunday of Eastertide: 26th April, 2009
Offertory: £1,387
Second: Altar Society: £490

Thank you

TODAY

TODAY IS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS and the SECOND COLLECTION is for the Diocesan Priest' Training Fund
The PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses.

THIS WEEK

MAY DEVOTIONS continue each weekday evening starting at 7.45 p.m. with the Rosary, followed by a short meditation about Our Lady and ending with Benediction.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AT REDNAL will take place as usual this week on Wednesday, commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. and ending with Benediction at c. 4.45 p.m.

ORATORY YOUNG ADULTS' GROUP (for those aged 20 to 35) meet on the first Thursday of each month, to share and deepen their faith and to socialise. The next meeting is on Thursday May 7th at 7.30 p.m. in the Oratory House, and the discussion will be

on "Portraying the Catholic View of Sexuality in Secular Britain". Enquiries to Richard on 07905 601721, or to Fr Anton.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB: The next meeting will be in Edgbaston on 20th May from 2—4 p.m. when the speaker will be Raymond De Souza and the topic *Mysterium Fidei*. Raymond is the Founder and Director of Saint Gabriel Communications, Australia's first international outreach promoting Catholic Apologetics. He is also the Chairman of the New Evangelization Office of the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the United States and EWTN program host. All women are welcome. For more details contact Jackie Parkes: 688 4154.

Our MAY PROCESSION will take place on Sunday 24th May (Ascension Sunday) at 4 p.m.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS OF ROME

A short series of illustrated talks will be given by Br. John Parker S.M., BSc, BD, MA and CAES (Boston College), an expert in Christian Roman history and archaeology, on Saturday, May 9th and Sunday May 10th in the Cloister Buildings. The lectures are free, but there will be a voluntary collection to help contribute to costs.

Br. John is a Marist Brother who began working as a guide to English-speaking pilgrims in Rome during the summer holidays when he taught at St. Chad's College, Wolverhampton. He continued while working at Maryvale Institute and for ten years he has been a lecturer on **Early Christianity in Rome** at the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Glasgow.

Br. John writes: **"Catacombs" is one of those word which produces a response in many people. When you ask them to say what they know, they very often run out of words quite quickly. This course sets out to remedy this. We may find that some of our cherished ideas about them will be challenged, but we will be all the better for that when we reach the end.**

Saturday 11:30 *Part A* Introduction and where the Catacombs are located. *Part B* The Names of the Catacombs
Saturday 3:30 p.m. *Part A* How they made the Catacombs *Part B* The Catacombs down the Ages
Sunday 3:00 p.m. *Part A* Why Christians used Catacombs *Part B* What we find in the Catacombs.

